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BY

JAMES COMPER GRAY,

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OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. VII.

Containing Proverbs: Ecclesiastes: Song of Solomon.

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THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

Introduction.

I. Title. The superscription of the book, which has been handed down in the Masoretic text, and which rests upon several passages in the book itself (as i. 1, x. 1, xxv. 1), may be more correctly rendered Sayings of Solomon. (See titles in the LXX. and of the Vulgate.) The Heb. word does, indeed, sometimes describe proverbs in the true sense, or general practical maxims, growing out of the spirit of a people and expressed in a popular form; but in itself it signifies only resemblance, likeness, and it is therefore used, according to Oriental poetry, to designate symbolic or parabolic apothegms, or poetic and philosophical maxims in the widest sense. (See Dr. Otto Zöckler's Introduction.) **II. Author.** That Solomon was the author of the principal part of this book has never been doubted; it is, no doubt, a selection from the three thousand proverbs which he is said to have spoken (1 Kings iv. 32). It did not, however, as it stands proceed from him: from xxv. to xxix. inclusive they are said to have been arranged by order of King Hezekiah; xxx. contains the instructions of Agur to his friends Ithiel and Ucal; and xxxi. those of King Lemuel's mother to her son (*Litton*). It seems certain that the collection was arranged in the order in which we now have it, by different hands, but it is not, therefore, to be concluded that they are not the productions of Solomon. Jewish writers say that Solomon wrote the Canticles in his youth, the Proverbs in his riper years, and Ecclesiastes in his old age (*Horne*). **III. Scope.** "To instruct men in the deeper mysteries of true wisdom and understanding, the height and perfection of which is the true knowledge of the Divine will and the sincere fear of the Lord" (*Roberts*). To this end the book is filled with the choicest sententious aphorisms, infinitely surpassing all the ethical sayings of the ancient sages, and comprising in themselves distinct doctrines, duties, etc., of piety towards God, of equity and benevolence towards man, and of sobriety and temperance, together with precepts for the right education of children, and for the relative situations of subjects, magistrates, and sovereigns" (*Horne*). **IV. Characteristics.** "It may be rightly called a book of good works; for Solomon there teaches the nature of a godly and useful life, so that every man aiming at godliness should make it his daily handbook or book of devotion, and often read in it and compare with it his life" (*Luther*). "The Book of Proverbs is the best statesman's manual which was ever written. An adherent to the political economy and spirit of that collection of apothegms and essays would do more to eradicate from a people the causes of extravagance, debasement, and ruin, than all the contributions to political economy of Say, Smith, Malthus, and Chalmers together" (*Coleridge*). "All the heathen moralists and proverbialists joined together cannot furnish us with one such book as that of the Proverbs" (*Stuart*). "The Proverbs are so justly founded on principles of human nature, and so adapted to the permanent interests of man, that they agree with the manners of every age, and may be assumed as rules for the direction of our conduct in every condition and rank of life, however varied in its complexion or diversified by circumstances; they embrace not only the concerns of private morality but the great objects of political importance" (*Gray*). "From the oratory of David we now pass to the school of Solomon, to find in the son of the greatest of theologians the first of philosophers" (*Michaelis*).

ADDITIONAL NOTE.—*The Book of Proverbs especially adapted for young men.*—"The leading design of this portion of God's Word is, as stated in the beginning of it, to give to the young men knowledge and discretion (1—4), which it especially directs him to seek by attention to the pious instructions of his parents (1—8, vi. 20—23) and the precepts of heavenly wisdom. It is

Synopsis.

(According to Angus.)

Part I.—A connected discourse on the value and attainment of true wisdom .. i.—ix.

Part II.—Proverbs, strictly so called, expressed with much force and simplicity. ..... x.—xxii. 16.

Part III.—Contains several renewed admonitions on the study of wisdom xxii. 17—xxiv.

Part IV.—Proverbs selected by the men of Hezekiah; by those, that is, whom he employed to restore the service of the Jewish Church ..... xxv.—xxix.

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(According to Zöckler.)

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2. Addition ..... xxiv. 23, 24.

Part IV.—GLEANINGS BY THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH.

1. Admonition to the fear of God, etc... xxv.
2. Various warnings..... xxvi.—xxix.

Part V.—THE SUPPLEMENTS.

1. Words of Agur..... xxx.
2. Words of Lemuel, etc. .....xxxi.

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indeed a storehouse of practical wisdom. It is a guide to his affections (iv. 6—23), to guard him against those temptations to which youth is most exposed (i. 10, ii. 16—19, v. 1—14, vi. 24—35, vii. 5—27, ix. 13—18, xxiii. 26—35, xxix. 3), and to direct him with regard to his settlement in life, by pointing out the advantages of a wise (xiv. 1, xix. 14, xxxi. 10—31) and the evils of a wrong choice (xi. 22, xix. 13, xxi. 9—19, xxv. 24, xxvii. 15. 16). It moreover gives him that knowledge of the world which will abundantly supply his want of experience, and guide his feet into the way of peace in his intercourse with it, teaching him what to expect and how to act under the ever-varying circumstances in which he may be placed" (*Nicholls*).

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) proverbs, root of Heb. word sigs. either *to rule*, or *to resemble:* so these Provs. are some of them *maxims*, and others *parables;* and not proverbs. in merely the current and popular sense. Solomon,[a] who if he did not *compose* all, was at least the *compiler*, "and fixed upon all the sanction of an approving inspiration."[b] the . . David, son and father may well be proud of ea. other. king . . Israel, a great nation, and a great king. It was *this* Sol. and no other man, with or assuming the name, who wrote this book—a royal author who wrote royally. (2) know,[c] become acquainted with. wisdom, piety: this, in its widest sense, the truest wisdom. instruction, admonition; warning and discipline. perceive, discern, spiritual insight. (3) receive, into the heart as principles of holy living. the . . wisdom, the correction and discipline of religion. justice, or right walking in relation to God. judgment, true opinion concerning conduct, custom. equity, what is right and reasonable towards man. (4) subtilty, cunning, in sense of skilfulness; in discriminating betw. truth and error, right and wrong. simple, open, candid inquirer. to . . man, this bk. pre-eminently one for youths. knowledge, of morals. discretion, in speech and conduct.

A great teacher and true learner (*vv.* 1—6).—In these six verses we have—I. A great teacher. 1. His history, the son of a great man, the king of a great people; 2. His lessons, their form; 3. His design, mental and moral culture. II. A true learner. 1. A wise man; 2. Attentive; 3. Improving.[d]

Proverbs.—One of the missionaries was working up into practical use a large collection of national proverbs gathered during many years of extended travel, and I subjoin a few, which especially struck me, either by their quaint force or their resemblance to our own wise saws. For instance, the well-known warning not to look a gift horse in the mouth, has its equivalent in Badaga, one of the Indian tongues, "If any one offers you a buffalo, do not ask if she gives milk;" and the Malayali rendering of "A burnt child dreads the fire," is identical with the corresponding French proverb, "A scalded cat fears cold water," while the Hindu version is very picturesque and characteristic, "He whose father was killed by a bear is afraid of a black stump." Again, we say, "If you send an ass on its travels it will not come back a horse," which in Tamil runs, "You may decorate an ass, but that will not make it a horse;" and another dialect expresses nearly the same idea by the sententious adage, "A donkey may grow, but he will never be an elephant." The European proverbs that "No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*," and that "Familiarity breeds contempt," are tersely and picturesquely combined in the Tamil adage, "The temple cat does not fear the idol." The Malayalis reprove a boaster who glories over the unfortunate, with the pithy remark, "Any one can leap a fallen tree;" and their proverb, "Running up and down the boat does not bring one sooner to land," is a keen rebuke to those who chafe and fret under circumstances of forced inaction; while the

a 1 K. iii. 12, 1v. 29, 32; Ecc. xii. 9, 10.

b Miller, who says: "Proverb (*proverbium* of the Lat.) is a very good translation, bec., as so terse and graphic as to be *proverbium* (*for*, or *instead of*, much verbiage), the form of speech being pregnant, and by some turn or trope crowding *multum in parvo*, the idea *pro verbo* or *pro verbis* answers very perfectly."

c Ps. cxix. 98—100; 2 Ti. iii. 15—17; 1 Th. v. 21; Ps. xvii. 4.

vv. 1, 2. *Dr. J. Jortin, Ss.* iii. 276.

vv. 1—4. *J. Abernethy, Ss.* iii. 1.

d Dr. Thomas.

Proverbs: "The wit of one man, and the wisdom of many."—*Earl Russell.* "Remnants which, on account of their shortness and correctness, have been saved out of the wreck and ruins of ancient philosophy."—*Aristotle.* "Short sentences, into which, as in rules, the ancients have compressed life."—*Agricola.* "Well-known and well-used dicta, framed in a somewhat out-of-the-way form or fashion."—*Erasmus.* "Edge tools of speech, which cut and penetrate the knots of business and affairs."—*Bacon.*

sacred warning, not to cast pearls before swine is aptly paraphrased by the question, "What is the use of reading the Vedas to a wild buffalo?" A few more Tamil sayings seem well worthy of notice. "The tears of the oppressed are sharp swords," reads like a sentence from the Proverbs of Solomon: and "The flower out of reach is dedicated to God," is surely a most graceful statement of the futility of day dreams of service and sacrifice in the pathless future. "The ant, measured by its own hand is eight spans long,' expresses with superior elegance and force the gist of more than one English proverb; and "A black cow may give white milk," is an adage admirable for terseness and point, even if doubtful in morality. There is much shrewdness in the Servian proverbs, "Speak the truth, but come away quickly after," and "When an old dog barks, then see what the matter is;" and volumes of truth and beauty are summed up in the simple saying, "The sun goes over unclean places but is not defiled." Of how many bright and holy lives spent in labour among vice and misery, might this proverb be taken as the fittest motto! Russian proverbs present a remarkable combination of sound common sense, deep religious feeling, and pithy, almost coarse expression. A few taken almost at random will illustrate all three. "Measure your cloth ten times, for you can only cut it once." "A fool can cast a stone into the sea, but a hundred wise men cannot get it out." "If you knew where you would fall, you could put down straw." "Pray to God, but row towards shore." "With God go over the sea; without God cross not the threshold." "A mother's prayer saves from the depths of the sea." "Fear not the rich man's frowns, fear the beggar's tears." "Love me when I am black, when I am white every one will love me." "We cannot go to church for the mud, but we may get to the tavern." "Fleas do not bite each other." "No need to plant fools, they grow of themselves." "Ask a pig to dinner, and she will put her feet on the table."[e]

5, 6. (5) **wise . . hear,**[a] 1, conscious ignorance, and desire to know, are fruits of wisdom; 2, who is there who may not teach something? **and . . learning,**[b] 1, constantly increasing; 2, learning of many kinds, and all useful. **and . . understanding,**[c] *i.e.* he who has widened his knowledge by hearing. **shall . . counsels,**[d] *i.e.* shall learn the art, and attain the power of ruling. (6) **understand,** *etc.*, "The climax of the definition of wisdom."[e] "Piety or wisdom is the only equipment for understanding these Proverbs."[f]

Proverbs (*c.* 6).—I. Abundant in all languages. II. As a rule spring from the people. III. Marked by great diversity of form. IV. Since so popular, natural that the Spirit should use them. V. Those of this book all grave and good.[g]

A proverb defined.—A proverb is much matter decocted into few words. . . . Six essentials are required to the completing of a perfect proverb, namely, that it be—

1. Short, 2. Plain, 3. Common, 4. Figurative, 5. Ancient, 6. True.	Otherwise it is no proverb, but a	1. Oration, 2. Riddle, 3. Secret, 4. Sentence, 5. Upstart, 6. Libel.[h]

"By reading a man does as it were antedate his life, and makes himself contemporary with the ages past. And this way of running up beyond one's real nativity is much better than Plato's preexistence; because here a man knows something of the state and is the wiser for it, which he is not in the other."—*Collier.*

e Overland, Inland, and Upland.

"How much more doth it concern us to be hearers ere we offer to be teachers of others. He gathers that hears, he spends that teacheth. If we spend before we gather we shall soon prove bankrupts."—*Bp. Hall.*

a Cases.—*Apostles,* Ma. xiii. 11, 16; Jo. ii. 22, xii. 16: *Ethiopian noble,* Ac. viii. 27—39: *S. Paulus,* Ac. xiii. 7: *Bereans,* Ac. xvii. 11, 12: *Apollos,* Ac. xviii. 24—28; 1 Co. iii. 6.

b Ph. iii. 12; Pr. ix. 9; Ex. xviii. 17—24; 1 Co. iii. 18.

c Ps. cxix. 18, 33, 34; 1 Co. ii. 9, 10; He. xiii. 9.

d Lit. *helmsmanships,* fr. root = cord, *i.e.* rope of a rudder.

e Stanley.

f Miller.

g Dr. Arnot.

h T. Fuller.

holiness the right path to knowledge

a Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxi. 10; Ecc. xii. 13; He. xii. 28, 29.

b Cases.—*Cain*, Ge. iv. 6—8: *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, 1 S. ii. 12: *Rehoboam*, 1 K. xii. 13.

c Ps. xxxvi. 1; Je. viii. 9.

v. 7. *Dr. H. More*, *Ss.* 85; *W. F. Vance*, *Ss.* 101; *J. Yonge*, *Ss.* i. 141; *W. Gresley*, *Ss.* 139.

Proverbs are—"Jewels five words long, that, on the stretch'd forefinger of all time, sparkle for ever."—*Tennyson.*

d R. T. S.

If our stock of knowledge be not increasing, it is wasting.

observe parental instruction

a Cases.—*Abraham*, Ge. xxii. 9: *Moses*, He. xi. 23: *Samuel*, 1 S. i. 28: *Solomon*, 1 K. iv. 29, 30; 2 Ch. ix. 8; *cf.* 1 K. xi. 5—11: *Timothy*, 2 Tim. i. 5, iii. 15.

b Ep. vi. 2; Co. iii. 20; Je. xxxv. 18, 19; Lu. ii. 15; Jo. xix. 27.

vv. 7—9. *H. Goodwin*, *Ss.* ii. 262.

v. 9. *A. Batty*, see *English Preacher*, i. 121.

"As letters graven in the body of a tree, they grow up with the tree, and the fruit of the tree grows up with the tree, and therefore the twigs break not with the great-

7. **fear . . Lord,**[a] 1, lodged in mind, memory, heart; 2, respect for His authority, power, presence; 3, holy, filial fear. **is . . knowledge**, the first and *chief* thing, in all true knowledge: that His glory—and therefore our good—may be advanced by what we learn. **fools,**[b] the hardened, the stupid, sinners who reject God's rule. **despise,**[c] as men puffed up with conceit. **wisdom**, piety, as the right rule of life, and end of study. **instruction**, of age, holiness, experience.

The root of knowledge (*v.* 7).—I. Show the advantage of knowledge, even of worldly knowledge; especially of the higher knowledge, of the way of salvation. II. Show that the first step in this higher knowledge is the fear of the Lord. He who fears God will study the best things, and study them well.

Two hard students.—In the early part of the reign of King William III., the University of Edinburgh had, at the same time, two bright ornaments, Dr. Rule, M.D., and Mr. Campbell, Professor of Divinity. Dr. Rule was also an acceptable and tried minister. The lodging-rooms of these two eminent men stood so as that the windows were opposite to each other, though at some distance. Dr. Rule used to sit up late at his studies, and it was Professor Campbell's custom to rise very early in the morning; so that many times the doctor's candle would not be put out by the time Mr. Campbell's was lighted. The one, their friends used to call the evening star; and the other, the morning star. They lived together in great love, and a most intimate friendship subsisted between them till death. The doctor died but a little time before Mr. Campbell. When the tidings came to Mr. Campbell that the doctor was departed, he was deeply impressed. He presently recovered himself, and said, "that the evening star was gone down, and the morning star would soon disappear."[d]

* 8, 9. (8) **son,**[a] the reader is addressed with parental kindness and authority. **father,**[b] obedience to a father the finest model of subordination in patriarchal times. **forsake**, as old-womanish, or old-fashioned. **the . . mother**, which she practised for her good, and urges—out of her loving heart—for thine. (9) **they**, being obeyed. **ornament**, garland. **grace**, gracefulness: *i.e.* a beautiful adornment. **and . . neck**, emblem of authority gained by learning and obedience.

Filial love a blossom of beauty (*v.* 9).—I. God the Author of the family constitution. II. Intended the parent to rule in the world of home. III. The moral beauty of children found in obedience to these Divinely appointed home-rulers.

Influence of a mother's love.—The Rev. Thomas Binney, when preaching a funeral sermon for Mr. Birrell, who died while a student for the ministry, mentioned the following fact in connection with his early career, previous to his conversion:—"What a mysterious thing! What a mysterious, magical, divine thing, is a mother's love! How it nestles about the heart, and goes with the man, and speaks to him pure words, and is like a guardian angel! This young man could never take any money that came to him from his mother, and spend that upon a Sunday excursion, or a treat to a theatre. It was a sacred thing with him; it had the impression and the inscription of his mother's image, and his mother's purity, and his mother's piety, and his mother's love. It was a sacred thing to him; and those things that he felt to be questionable, or felt

to be sinful, were always to be provided for by other resources, and by money that came to him from other hands. Oh! there is the poetry of the heart, the poetry of our home and domestic affections, the poetry of the religion of the hearth and the altar, about that little incident; and it strikes me as being perfectly beautiful."—*My mother's Bible.*—On one of the shelves in my library, surrounded by volumes of all kinds, on various subjects and in various languages, stands an old book, in its plain covering of brown paper, unprepossessing to the eye, and apparently out of place among the more pretentious volumes that stand by its side. To the eye of a stranger it has certainly neither beauty nor comeliness. Its covers are worn; its leaves marred by long use; its pages, once white, have become yellow with age; yet, old and worn as it is, to me it is the most beautiful and most valuable book on my shelves. No other awakens such associations, or so appeals to all that is best and noblest within me. It is, or rather it *was*, my mother's Bible—companion of her best and holiest hours, source of her unspeakable joy and consolation. From it she derived the principles of a truly Christian life and character. It was the light to her feet and the lamp to her path. It was constantly by her side; and, as her steps tottered in the advancing pilgrimage of life, and her eyes grew dim with age, more and more precious to her became the well-worn pages. One morning just as the stars were fading into the dawn of the coming Sabbath, the aged pilgrim passed on beyond the stars and beyond the morning, and entered into the rest of the eternal Sabbath—to look upon the face of Him of whom the law and the prophets had spoken, and whom not having seen she had loved. And now no legacy is to me more precious than that old Bible. Years have passed; but it stands there on its shelf, eloquent as ever, witness of a beautiful life that is finished, and a silent monitor to the living. In hours of trial and sorrow it says: Be not cast down, my son; for thou shalt yet praise Him who is the health of thy countenance, and thy God. In moments of weakness and fear it says: Be strong now, my son, and quit yourself manfully. When, sometimes, from the cares and conflicts of external life, I come back to the study, weary of the world and tired of men—of men that are so hard and selfish, and a world that is so unfeeling—and the strings of the soul have become untuned and discordant, I seem to hear that Book saying, as with the well-remembered tones of a voice long silent: Let not your heart be troubled. For what is your life? It is even as a vapour. Then my troubled spirit becomes calm; and the little world, that had grown so great and so formidable, sinks into its true place again. I am peaceful, I am strong. There is no need to take down the volume from the shelf, or open it. A glance of the eye is sufficient. Memory and the law of association supply the rest. Yet there are occasions when it is otherwise; hours in life when some deeper grief has troubled the heart, some darker, heavier cloud is over the spirit and over the dwelling, and when it is a comfort to take down that old Bible and search its pages. Then, for a time, the latest editions, the original languages, the notes and commentaries, and all the critical apparatus which the scholar gathers around him for the study of the Scriptures, are laid aside; and the plain old English Bible that was my mother's is taken from the shelf.[c]

ness of the weight of it; because they grow up together."—*Gibbs.*

"Be very vigilant over thy child in the April of his understanding, lest the frosts of May nip his blossoms. While he is a tender twig, straighten him; whilst he is a new vessel, season him; such as thou makest him, such commonly shalt thou find him. Let his first lesson be obedience, and his second shall be what thou wilt. Give him education in good letters, to the utmost of thy ability and his capacity. Season his youth with the love of his Creator, and make the fear of his God the beginning of his knowledge. If he have an active spirit, rather rectify than curb it; but reckon idleness among his chiefest faults. As his judgment ripens, observe his inclination, and tender him a calling that shall not cross it. Forced marriages and callings seldom prosper. Show him both the mow and the plough; and prepare him as well for the danger of the skirmish as possess him with the honour of the prize."—*Quarles.*

[c] *Dr. Haven.*

The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love and imitate Him.

10. **sinners**, ungodly in general: but esp. professional and habitual sinners. **entice**,[a] make a door of thee: lay thee open. **consent . . not**,[b] afford thou no entrance. Open not thy heart to their friendship, nor thy mind to their plausible suggestions.

A father's warning (*v.* 10).—I. The enticers of youth. 1. From within; 2. From without. II. The enticements. 1. Pleasant; 2. Alluring; 3. Deceitful; 4. Dangerous. III. The prescription. 1. Blunt refusal; 2. Obstinate resistance.[c]

A child tempted to disobedience.—A boy was once tempted by his companions to pluck some ripe cherries from a tree which his father had forbidden him to touch. "You need not be afraid," said they, "for if your father should find out that you had taken them, he is so kind, that he would not hurt you." "For that very reason," replied the boy, "I ought not to touch them; for though my father may not hurt me, my disobedience would hurt my father." —*One false step.*—A boy who was a scholar in one of the Sunday schools in Leeds, was on his way to school, when he was accosted by some others, who invited him to join them in a walk. At first he refused, then vacillated, then consented. They sauntered into the principal street of the town; then into a yard, climbed upon a wall, and found themselves within reach of the window of a warehouse, which, on trial, they found unfastened. Without reflecting on the consequences, some of them opened the window and got in, leaving the Sunday scholar to keep watch on the wall. They ransacked the place until they came to a desk, which by some means they opened, and abstracted a sum of money. This they divided, giving to their companion a share of it. Unknown to them, their motions had been observed, and their object suspected; and very quickly the police had them all in safe custody. The widowed mother of the Sunday scholar received late in the day the intelligence that her boy was in prison on a charge of robbing a warehouse. It came like a lightning blast upon her spirit. The examination of the boys by the magistrate soon followed, and notwithstanding the earnest protestations of the boy, and the solemn assurance of his widowed mother that it was his first offence, the evidence of participation in the deed was so conclusive, that, in common with his guilty guides to crime, he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in the House of Correction. That was too much for his yet unhardened heart; it was a stroke which nature could not bear. He sickened from that hour, and at the expiration of about three weeks a message was sent to his widowed mother to fetch away the *dead* body of her son. He died emphatically of a broken heart.

11—14. (11) **if . . say**, if, for example, their enticement take this form. **come**, become one of our fraternity. **let . . blood**, as huntsmen in pursuit of their calling. **for . . cause**,[a] not offering the excuse of even private revenge. (12) **let us**, *etc.*, as a pit dug by hunter suffers not the prey to escape. (13) **we . . substance**, but how if the law presently found them? **we . . spoil**, and our memory with stings, our conscience with remorse, our souls with guilt. (14) **cast . . us**,[b] wh. involves the same lot hereafter. **let . . purse**, and one punishment, one doom, one hell. All this an example of the unblushing effrontery with wh. wicked schemes are sometimes proposed.

Warning against temptation.—Introd.—What sinners are—what it is to entice (boys suggesting to others the robbing of an

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a Cases.—*Adam*, Ge. iii. 6: *Prophet*, 1 K. xiii. 15—19, 24: *Jehoshaphat*, 1 K. xxii. 4: *Joash*, 2 Ch. xxiv. 17, 18; *Galatians*, Ga. i. 6, 7, iii. 1.

b Cases.—*Joseph*, Ge. xxxix. 9, 10: *Micaiah*, 1 K. xxii. 13, 14: *Job*, ii. 9, 10: *Peter*, Ac. viii. 18, 20: *Jesus*, Ma. vi. 3—10.

c W. W. Whythe. "It is of vast moment to be 'just right' when starting. At Preston, at Malines, at many such places, the railway lines go gently asunder; so fine is the angle that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little further on one of them turns a corner, or drives into a tunnel, and now that the speed is full the angle opens up, and at the rate of a mile a minute the divided convoy flies asunder; one passenger is on the way to Italy, another to the swamps of Holland; one will step out in London, the other in view of the Irish Channel."—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

a Comp. mocking question of the tempter concerning Job (i. 9). "Doth Job fear God *for nought*?"

"The 'evil doers' deride their victims as being righteous *gratis*, or 'in vain.' They get nothing by it. It does them no good."—*Spk. Com.*

"Sinners are essentially hypo-

orchard, etc.). I. Reasons why we should "not consent." 1. Because when we begin to sin it is hard to stop. (Boy running down hill; prisoner in gaol—how he came to be in such a place; beginnings of sin.) Flee from all appearance of evil. 2. Because it is dangerous. (Railway train thrown off line by log of wood or stone. Sin throws us off the rails of God's commands. Laying bricks, each one must be put true, or the building may become unsafe. So the habits we form day by day.) 3. Because it is disgraceful. In the appearance sin gives us, and in the company into which it brings us. Effect of sin on the countenance—anger, deceit, envy, etc. The company sin brings us into here and hereafter. Application:—Need for pardon of the sins we have committed, and for grace to keep us from sinning still. How we may gain these.[c]

Power of filial love.—The three sons of an Eastern lady were invited to furnish her with an expression of their love before she went a long journey. One brought a marble tablet, with the inscription of her name; another presented her with a rich garland of fragrant flowers; the third entered her presence and thus accosted her, "Mother, I have neither marble tablet nor fragrant nosegay, but I have a heart: here your name is engraved, here your memory is precious, and this heart full of affection will follow you wherever you travel, and remain with you wherever you repose."

15, 16. (15) **walk not,** *comp.* Ps. i. 1. **refrain . . path,** do not take the first downward step, for the hill is slippery and steep. Avoid the very beginnings of evil.[a] Do not parley with temptation. (16) **run,** the sign of their eagerness. **evil,** of all sorts, wh. in the end is sure to become evil unto themselves. **shed blood,**[b] see *v.* 11, and comp. *v.* 18.

Evil companionship.—Mr. Jay gives, in his *Reminiscences*, the following mournful account of a young man, the only son of his predecessor at Bath. He had good abilities, and seemed much inclined to become truly religious; but he "became acquainted with some sceptical, or as, by a patent of their own, they call themselves, free-thinking young men; gave up the house of God and the Sabbath. Swimming on a Sunday, for amusement and experiment, he caught a chill, which brought on consumption. This for months gave him warning, and space for repentance; but it is to be feared this grace of God was in vain. During his gradual decline he refused all intercourse with pious friends or ministers; and when his good nurse entreated him to call me in, as I lived close by, and there had been such an intimacy between us, he frowned and rebuked her, and ordered her to mind her own business. On the last day of his life, unasked, I ventured into his dying chamber. He was sensible, but exclaimed, 'O Voltaire! Voltaire!' He then raised himself up in the bed, and, wringing his hands, again exclaimed, 'O that young man!' I said, 'My dear sir, what young man?' With a countenance indescribable he answered, 'I will not tell you.' What have I seen in a long ministry of the dire effects of evil associates and licentious publications!"

17—19. (17) **surely . . bird,** "strictly speaking, the first *proverb* in the book," and supposed by some to mean that birds, seeing a trap, would not go into it; and so the innocent would

crites. They dare not show their true characters to their fellowmen. Were they to do so, instead of enjoying social fellowship and patronage, they would be shunned as monsters. Hence they always work under mask, and love the dark."—*David Thomas, D.D.*

b Better trans. as a promise or offer, "Thou shalt cast in thy lot," etc., *i.e.* thou shalt have full share in all we get.

c Dr. Newton.

a "The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself that way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows. Satan tempts the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold."—*An Old Writer.*

b Isa. lix. 7; Ro. iii. 15.

v. 15. *Dr. J. Lawson*, ii. 456.

Those are marked for ruin that are deaf to reproof and good counsel.

a "The sense of the proverb is,—the wicked, who think themselves

shrewd and wise, are more silly and foolish than even the birds of the air which flit over their heads. The birds flee from the net wh. is spread in their sight, but the wicked *spread a net for themselves* and are taken thereby."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ps. vii. 14—16.

c Ha. ii. 9; 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10.

d Dr. Thomas.

v. 19. *Dr. T. Hunt,* 53.

e Whitecross

be vainly hunted after. The point, however, is not that a net is vainly set when the bird sees it, but just the opposite: in vain the bird sees it when it is set, for he wilfully and foolishly rushes into it.[a] bird, lit. *master of a wing.* (18) own blood,[b] this is the unexpected but appropriate issue of their plottings. (19) greedy of gain,[c] and so strives to gain it unlawfully. of the owners, better, *of him that gets it in possession.* It becomes a fatal curse to him.

Moral traps (*v.* 17).—I. Sin lays traps for souls. Net made of sensuality, avarice, ambition, etc. II. These traps are laid in secrecy. Sin works insidiously—takes advantage of ignorance, etc. III. These traps must be exposed. This the work of the true teacher.[d]

Good use of Bible precept.—A poor boy going to a Sabbath school was met by a companion, who invited him to play the truant; but he absolutely refused, and went to school. When this came to be known, the boy was asked what it was that kept him from complying with the temptation. He answered, "Because I read in my Bible, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.'"[e]

a The personification of abstract qualities is an efficient mode of producing impression and conveying instruction, esp. to the young.

b "Wisdom goes where all public matters go, to the great squares and places of business."—*Miller.*

"She need not be ashamed of her teaching, bec. she is a true friend of the people."—*Otto Zöckler.*

c Ru. iv. 1, 2.

vv. 20, 21. *A. Burnaby,* i.

d R. T. S.

20, 21. (20) wisdom, Heb. *chocmah,* fr. *chacam,* to judge, decide. Here the word used is a plural one, *wisdoms.* for all forms of wisdom. We may express the ideas of the word by the terms *intelligent piety,*[a] that wisdom of which the "fear of the Lord" is the beginning. without, out of doors. streets, or *open squares,* the usual resorts of men.[b] (21) place of concourse, lit. *where confusion is;* the *hum* of crowded marketplaces; noisy places. openings of the gates, where the city magistrates held their courts,[c] and other business was done. city, poss. *the citadel;* or the interior parts of the city.

Wisdom's voice (*vv.* 20—29).—I. An awakening appeal. 1. By whom it is made; 2. The places in which it is addressed; 3. The manner in which it is delivered; 4. The persons to whom it is applied. II. An important exhortation. 1. The subject to which this exhortation refers—turn in repentance, with full purpose of heart, without delay; 2. The inducement to do this. III. A solemn denunciation. 1. Its procuring cause; 2. Its terrific nature—aggravating consideration.

A sceptic in a storm.—Captain Benson relates that the late Percy Bysshe Shelley, who made no secret of his infidelity, and who seemed to have spirits which no danger could appal, when overtaken by a storm at sea, while sailing in Lord Byron's yacht, appeared to have lost all energy, and the horrors of approaching death made him weep like a child. Those holy names which he never before pronounced but in ridicule, he now called upon in moving accents of serious prayer, and implored the protection of that Being whose existence he affected to disbelieve.[d]

a "The three classes are addressed in a graduated scale. 'Simple,' *open,* fatally open to evil; then the 'scorners,' mocking at all good; lastly, the 'fools' in the darker

22, 23. (22) simple,[a] or ignorant; those who, being unthoughtful and frivolous, are easily drawn aside by temptation. scorners, who ridicule as well as neglect truth and goodness. sneering at sacred things. fools, those who are malignant, and hate knowledge. The marvel of grace is the Divine longsuffering with such. (23) turn you, the physical movement that illus. the moral act of *repentance.*[b] "Turn, for you *can* do it, you must do it, you are bound to do it." reproof, but not reproof only;

it is immediately connected with promises and offers of grace. spirit,[c] *comp.* Joel ii. 28; Ac. ii. 17.

Sinners admonished (*v.* 23).—I. The reproofs He administers. 1. By the Scriptures: 2. By ministers: 3. By conscience; 4. By Providence. II. The submission He requires. We are to return —1. With penitent hearts; 2. Believing minds; 3. Fervent devotion; 4. Prompt obedience. III. The encouragement He imparts. 1. A convincing Spirit; 2. Quickening Spirit; 3. Comforting Spirit; 4. Sanctifying Spirit.[d]

Four universalists.—In a town in the interior of America, the board of select men who governed its local affairs was composed of four universalists (or men who contended for the final happiness of all mankind, whether believers or not) and a pious physician. They acted through the year in great harmony as to the business of the town, but at their last meeting it was determined to attack the doctor. After they had finished their transactions, one of them said, "Doctor, we have been very happy in being associated with you the year past, and that the business of the town has been conducted in harmony, and to the satisfaction of our constituents. We have found you to be a man of good sense, extensive information, unbending integrity, and of the purest benevolence. It is astonishing to us that a man of your amiable character should believe the doctrine of future punishment." The doctor replied, "Gentlemen, I should regret very much the forfeiture of the good opinion which your partiality has led you to entertain of me. Will you have the goodness to answer candidly a few questions? Do you believe in a future state?" They replied, "We do." "You believe that death will introduce all men to a state of perfect happiness?" "Of this we have no doubt." "Are you now happy?" "We are not; we are far from it." "How do men act when they are unhappy, and know that happiness is within their reach?" "They endeavour to attain that happiness." "Do you believe that I understand the nature and operation of medicine?" "We have no doubt, doctor, of your skill in your profession; but what has that to do with the subject?" "In this box," said the doctor, taking a tin box in his hand, "are pills, which, if you swallow each of you one, will, without pain, carry you, within one hour, out of this world of trouble; and, if your doctrine be true, place you in a world of perfect felicity. Will you accept of one of them?" "No, sir." "Will you?" "No, sir." When they had all refused the doctor said, "You must excuse me, gentlemen, from embracing your doctrine until I have better evidence that you believe it yourselves." This closed the debate.

24, 25. (24) because, *etc.*, there seems to be an interval of silence, during wh. Wisdom waits to see if any would heed her. None accept, so her voice of pleading is changed for one of judgment.[a] refused, to stop in your wilful ways, and give heed to me. stretched . . hand, the fig. for earnestness in beseeching.[b] (25) set at nought, regarded as unimportant and worthless. "How natural therefore the doctrine that there comes a time when we have sinned away the day of grace!"[c] would none of, lit. *were not willing or inclined to it.*

Judgment follows disobedience (*vv.* 24—26).—I. A merciful visitation. 1. Call; 2. Entreaty; 3. Counsel; 4. Reproof. II. Just complaint. 1. Neglect; 2. Refusal; 3. Scorn. III. An

sense of the word, hardened, obstinate, perverse, hating the knowledge they have rejected."—*Spk. Com.*

b Eze. xxxiii. 11; Isa. lv. 7.

c "I offer to you both My word outwardly to your ears, and a plentiful measure of My Spirit to make that word effectual to you."—*Bishop Hall.*

d Eta in 400 Sks. *v.* 22. *Dr. H. Hammond*, iv. 575.
Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil, and a scarred or crooked oak will tell of the act for centuries to come. How forcibly does this figure teach the necessity of giving right tendencies to the minds and hearts of the young! "Wouldst thou but receive and hearken to the easiest things represented by God, these would enlighten and enlarge thy soul to receive more; especially, walking by the light thou hast, be it ever so little, that invites and draws in more."—*Abp. Leighton.*

a Comp. Isa. lxv. 12, lxvi. 4; Je. vii. 13, 14; Eze. viii. 18.

b Job xi. 13; Ps. lxviii. 31, lxxxviii. 9.

c Miller.
Ro. iii. 4, 5, x. 21.

vv. 24—26. *J. Pearce*, 387; *P. Skelton*, iii. 175.

awful threat. 1. God's laws are unchangeable; 2. He has plainly declared them; 3. He is clear of the sinner's blood.[d]

Misimproved privileges.—It is related of Jeine, the chief of one of the South Sea Islands, who had offered no small amount of opposition to the introduction of Christianity, that during a sickness which terminated in his death, he manifested more mental distress than is usually seen in a heathen. He often expressed a wish that "he had died ten years before." And why? The light of life and love had been shining around him, but he had opposed its entrance into his heart, and its power over his people. . And now, having loved darkness, in darkness of soul, stung by an upbraiding conscience, he must die.[e]

26, 27. (26) laugh, *etc.*,[a] comp. Ps. ii. 4. The words "laugh," with "mock," depict the style and manner in wh. calamity comes upon fools. There will be no grandeur about it, so that the sinner may be proud of his very woe. It will be wholly humiliating. fear cometh, or enters. (27) desolation, or a storm, suddenly sweeping down on you.[b] whirlwind, moving with fatal rapidity and overwhelming power. anguish, at an intolerable yet hopeless lot.

Advice of a dying father.—A gentleman called his sons around his dying bed, and gave them the following relation: "When I was a youth, the Spirit strove with me, and seemed to say, 'Seek religion now;' but Satan suggested the necessity of waiting till I grew up, because it was incompatible with youthful amusement. So I resolved I would wait till I grew up to be a man. I did so, and was then reminded of my promise to seek religion; but Satan again advised me to wait till middle age, for business and a young family demanded all my attention. 'Yes,' I said, 'I will do so; I will wait till middle age.' I did so; my serious impressions left me for some years. They were again renewed: conscience reminded me of my promises; the Spirit said, 'Seek religion now;' but then I had less time than ever. Satan advised my waiting till I was old; then my children would be settled in business, and I should have nothing else to do; I could then give an undivided attention to it. I listened to his suggestion, and the Spirit ceased to strive with me. I have lived to be old: but now I have no desire as formerly to attend to the concerns of my soul: my heart is hardened. I have resisted and quenched the Spirit: now there is no hope. Already I feel a hell within, the beginning of an eternal misery. I feel the gnawings of that worm that never dies. Take warning from my miserable end; seek religion now: let nothing tempt you to put off this important concern." Then in the greatest agonies he expired.

28—31. (28) not answer, though the call be ever so earnest.[a] early, in the usual sense of *earnestly*. not find me, though God's gracious promise is, "They that seek Me early shall find Me." (29) for, *etc.*, this verse distinctly gives the reason for Divine conduct wh. appears to be so strange. God refused to answer as a judgment on their prolonged wilfulness. did not choose, *i.e.* desire and seek. fear of the Lord, wh. is first step of the true wisdom. (30) would none, did not want my counsel. (31) eat . . way, reap as they sowed: find out to their surprise what is the true fruitage of rebellion and sin.[b]

d W. W. Whythe.

vv. 24—28. *Dr. Pusey*, i. 171.

e Gil.

"Be diligent in the practice of what you know if you would know more. Believe it, that is the way to grow."—*Abp. Leighton.*

a "The scorn and derision with wh. men look on pride and malice, baffled and put to shame, has something that answers to it in the Divine judgment."—*Spk. Com.*

b Comp. Mat. vii. 26, 27.

As at the Rom. siege of Jerusalem, desolation suddenly came on heedless Jews. *Milton* says: "Childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." *Wordsworth* writes: "Heaven lies about us in our infancy; and the child is father of the man." While *Pope* remarks: "Just as the twig is bent the tree is inclined."

vv. 24—31. *H. Goodwin*, iii. 120.

a Comp. Lu. xvi. 24—31.

b Isa. iii. 10; Eze. xi. 21; Ro. vi. 21; Ga. vi. 7, 8.

"'The fruit of their own way' is a very mixed metaphor, but means what the sinner wins to himself by the advance he

Too late.—I was once, says the Rev. J. East, in his work entitled *The Village*, called upon to visit a dying man in Bristol, under the following circumstances: He had not entered the church for many years. At last he made up his mind to go, and on the morning of the Sabbath he and his wife went. But the door was closed, the church being under repair. They returned home disappointed. In the evening they went to another church. It was so crowded that they could get no farther than the doorway, and were unable to hear a word. On the following Sunday he resolved to make another effort; but while he was dressing he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and never spoke again! He knew me when I entered his chamber. I preached the Gospel in his dying ear, but he was speechless, and I could not learn the state of his mind. This case illustrates some parts of the first chapter of Proverbs: "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." The procrastinating sinner may say, "I will serve God by-and-by. He shall have the services of my age:" and God may say, "No; thou shalt not have old age to offer Me."

32, 33. (32) turning away, instead of, as they should, turning *towards* Wisdom. The term is used in grave irony. prosperity, better, the *carelessness, easyfulness, false security*. "The easy-going indifference to higher truths is that wh. destroys." (33) dwell safely, lit. *in confidence*.[a] quiet from fear, as illus. by the wise man who built on the rock.[b]

The prosperity of fools (v. 32).—I. Fools are men with weak minds and wicked hearts—especially the latter. II. Such often prosper in a worldly sense. A man may get on in the world with little knowledge and less genius. III. The prosperity of such often leads to their destruction.[c]

Visit to a dying man.—"I once attended, on his dying bed," says Mr. Ford, "a man whose early history had given promise of better things, but whose goodness was as the morning cloud and the early dew. As I entered the room he fixed his eyes upon me, with a fearful expression of countenance, and in the spirit and almost in the very language of the Gadarene demoniac, exclaimed, 'Why are you come to torment me?' I replied, 'I am not come to torment you; I am come to tell you that there is mercy, mercy yet, and mercy even for you.' He raised his arm with vehemence, and said, 'No mercy for me! no mercy for me! no mercy for me! I have sinned through all; I have despised all. I am dying, and I am damned!' His arm fell, and he apparently ceased to breathe. I thought him dead, but was mistaken; there still was life; there was even consciousness. Fetching a long-drawn breath, as if for some desperate effort, and covering his face, with the evident intention of concealing the agony which was written there, he uttered the most awful groan I ever heard, and then expired. If anything could increase the horror of that scene, it was the following circumstance:—That man ascribed the ruin of his soul to a popular preacher, whom, on some public occasion, he heard deliver a sermon which deeply affected him, and whom, at the close of the service he was delighted to meet at the house of a mutual friend. But great was his disappointment. The individual who in the pulpit was a Boanerges, in the parlour played the mountebank, and in either character he seemed perfectly 'at home.' His

makes upon his path."—*Miller*.

If sinners cast not away their sins for God's sake, God will cast them away for their sins' sake.

v. 28. *W. Fenner*, i. 29; *Dr. W. Clagett*, iv. 387; *T. Arnold*, 121.

v. 31. *Dr. N. Carter*, 189.

"By the Holy Scriptures God expresses His mind to us. By prayer we express our mind to God."—*Bp. Hall*.

a De. xii. 10.

b Matt. vii. 24, 25.

So illus. fr. *Noah*, Ge. vi. 22, vii. 23; He. xi. 7: *Shadrach*, etc., Da. iii. 25: *Daniel*, Da. vi. 10, 22. Comp. also Jno. x. 28.

c H. S. Brown.

v. 32. *Dr. W. Bates*, ii. 205; *Dr. R. South*, iv. 61; *Dr. A. Trebeck*, 62; *R. Baxter*, 17.

v. 33. *Hon. G. T. Noel*, ii. 144.

The Roman Censors took such a distaste to the son of Africanus for his unworthy life that they drew from his finger the ring on which the image of his father was engraved. Because he had so greatly fallen off from his father's character, they would not, they said, allow him to wear in a ring the likeness of a parent whose image he did not bear in his mind or heart. The

children of Jesus, even the youngest, should strive to be like Him.

adventures, jokes, and anecdotes kept the company till past midnight in a roar of laughter. The consequence may be easily imagined. The unhappy man who was doomed to witness that incongruous scene persuaded himself that Christianity was disbelieved by its professional advocates, and thenceforth he treated it as unworthy of his notice."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—5. (1) receive my words, simply, *take them*, listen and attend to them; words of reproof, counsel, and promise. hide . . thee, as in a store, or treasury.[a] (2) incline thine ear, or, so as to point thine ear towards: sharpen, or prick thine ear, like an animal.[b] Dispose thyself earnestly to seek after Div. truth. heart, bec. head knowledge of spiritual things can never suffice: "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." apply, or bend. (3) criest after, the sign of importunate earnestness. knowledge, Heb. *binah*, discernment.[c] liftest, as if to eagerly shout. (4) silver, or money,[d] wh. engages the unwearying toil of men. (5) fear, the right sentiment to entertain towards God, and the right knowledge of Him to apprehend.

The treasure-trove (*vv.* 1—5).—I. There is a precious treasure. It has in the text three names,—wisdom, knowledge, understanding. II. The field where the treasure lies: the Bible. III. The search after the treasure: Bible to be read carefully, prayerfully, perseveringly. IV. The discovery of the treasure: certain, joyous, advantageous.[e]—*The seeking* (*vv.* 1—4); *the finding* (*vv.* 5—9).—A Father speaks, and He speaks as unto children. He demands a reasonable service, and promises a rich reward. In the fourfold repetition of the command there seems an order of succession, and the order when observed is both comely and instructive. It combines the beauty of blossom and the profit of the fruit. I. Receive my words. II. Incline thine ear. III. Cry after knowledge. IV. Seek her as silver.[f]

Treasure-trove.—Since the ancient brotherhood of treasure-seekers discarded the divining rod, the "hand of glory," and other unlawful appliances, it is surprising how successful they have been in disinterring the precious relics of antiquity. The researches which have disclosed the literature, arts, and arms of ancient Assyria, the sculptures of the Mausoleum and of Olympia, the plate-chest of Priam, or some other prehistoric king, the Mycenean find, and the antique metal-work unearthed by Di Cesnola in Cyprus, were all, or most of them, founded on a careful study of the sites and of the literary records relating to these; while Fortune also seems to have specially assisted those who were striving to do their work without her help. Ancient art in marble—as in the case of the Olympian statuary—must, we fear, always be found sadly defaced and mutilated from the effects of political spite as well as of time; and when the Christianity of the first centuries had made its peace with the world the monks often began what the Goths only completed. Work in the precious metals, however, when preserved at all, is, from the circumstances of its deposits, usually found intact, and the great gem engravings of antiquity are most of them lying un-

[a] Pr. vii. 1; Ps. cxix 11.

The *reception* and *retention* of Div. truths are both indicated in the terms of this verse.

[b] "The ear must be turned away from the sounds of earthly pleasure, the din of worldliness, and the voice of human speculation, and must listen attentively to communications from the spiritual and eternal."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

[c] Pr. i. 2, xvi. 16.

[d] Mat. xiii. 44; Lu. xv. 8.

Reference may poss. be to seeking the precious ores in dark mines.

Job xxviii. 12—20.

[e] *Dr. J. Edmonds.*
[f] *Dr. W. Arnot.*

A nobleman showed a friend his large collection of the richest gems, and remarked that they yielded him no income. The other replied, that he had two stones that cost him ten florins each, that yielded him two hundred florins a year. The common stones were useful; the idle treasures useless.

vv. 1—5. *C. Chais*, ii. 82; *Dr. J.*

injured somewhere. It shows the extent of surface under which priceless treasures of the utmost artistic and archæological interest may be hidden, when we find three actual or probable discoveries announced at once from three different quarters of the globe. The regalia of Cyrus the Great is reported to have been found accidentally by a Russian peasant woman on the banks of the Dniester, near the spot where he was defeated and slain by the Scythians in the sixth century before Christ. A thousand years later Attila was buried with the rich spoils of Rome, in the same part of the world—according to the annalists, in the bed of a river in Modern Roumania temporarily diverted from and again returned to its course. From Algeria comes news of the discovery of a vault of Roman construction in which Jugurtha is reported by tradition to have stored seventy-five loads of treasure, after his defeat by Metallus; and to cap the climax, certain Yankee speculators are said to be hot on the scent of the plant of the renowned Captain Kydd at last. This reminds us that the incomparable Edison has expressed himself confident that he can manufacture electro-magnetic instruments by which not only may the extent and richness of metallic veins be indicated, but also the nature of the ore they contain—a scientific divining rod calculated to throw the traditionary one completely into the shade.[g]

Gardiner, 381; *Dr. E. J. Burrow*, 288; *H. Goodwin*, i. 239.

Paulinus, when he was told that the Goths had sacked Nola, and plundered him of all that he had, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Lord, Thou knowest where I have laid up my treasure!"

"Many had proved wise if they had not thought themselves so." — *Bp. Hall.*

"We ought to glory in nothing, because we have nothing of our own." — *Cyprian.*

g *London Paper.*

6, 7. (6) **Lord . . wisdom,**[a] but they must be in right attitude of mind and heart to whom He gives it. **out of his mouth,** not by unknown agencies, but by rational instructions. (7) **sound wisdom,** in the sense of *healthy, nourishing*, and *confirming*. **buckler,** defending us with the efficiency of a skilfully used buckler. Heb. *maghen*, a frequent word in the Psalms,[b] **walk uprightly,**[c] walkers of innocence; whose behaviour is sound.

Good men and their God (*vv.* 6—9).—I. The description of men —righteous, walking uprightly, His saints. II. The God of good men. 1. As to what He is to creation generally; 2. As to what He is to the good specially. (1) He provides for their instruction; (2) He superintends their career; (3) He protects them from their enemies.[d]

Uncertainty of earthly possessions.—Some years since, Prince Christopher, brother to the late King of Hayti, came over to England on account of the disturbed state of St. Domingo. After meeting with disappointments here, the prince returned to his native country at the peril of his life, and succeeded in obtaining some papers he required. During his sojourn there he married a young lady of property, whose money was deposited with an opulent branch of her family; but a terrific earthquake which visited that ill-fated country swallowed up all her property, together with those who had it under their care. How true is it "riches are not for ever!"

a 1 K. iii. 9, 12; Ja. i. 5, iii. 17.

b Ps. iii. 10, vii. 10, etc.

c "The greatest man is he who chooses right with the most invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptation from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms, and most fearless under menaces and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, and on God is most unfaltering." — *Seneca.*

d *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 6. *W. Reading*, ii. 567; *A. Townson*, 40.

8, 9. (8) **paths of judgment,** or justice; "here by the substitution of the abstract for the concrete expression, 'paths of the just,' and therefore essentially synonymous with the 'way of the pious' in the second clause."[a] "God defends the right way, and those in it." **saints,** not the absolutely holy, but the devout and God-fearing;[b] those "called with a holy calling." (9) **righteousness,** *etc.*, all parts of man's duty to God and

a *Otto Zöckler.*

b Comp. Ps. lxxxv. 8, cxlviii. 14, cxlix. 9.

"'He preserves pious men in their integrity.'" —*Nicholls.*

to man. Jno. vii. 17. every good path, *the whole good track.*[c]

God the source of wisdom.—Some of the courtiers of the Emperor Sigismund, having no taste for learning, inquired why he so honoured and respected men of low birth on account of their science. The emperor replied—"In one day I can confer knighthood or nobility on many, in years I cannot bestow genius on one. Wise and learned men are created by God only. No advantage of education, no favourable combination of circumstances can produce talents where the Father of spirits hath not dropped the seeds of them in the souls which He hath made."[d]

10—12. (10) entereth,[a] as *v.* 2. pleasant, so as not to be *forcibly* sought, but *willingly*, as for personal gratification. (11) discretion, or reflection. understanding, or discernment. (12) way of the evil, from either accompanying or following them in their wilful and wicked paths. froward things,[b] Heb. *tahpuchoth*, fr. *hapac*, to pervert and overturn: so meaning *perversity*, upturning things.

Benefits of true wisdom (*vv.* 10—12).—I. What these benefits are. 1. It will keep us from the society of ungodly men; 2. And from their snares; 3. And will guide our feet in the paths of righteousness and peace. II. The vast importance of seeking after it. See the difference between the wicked and the righteous—1. In this world; 2. And in the world to come. Learn—(1) To form a right estimate of religion; (2) To let it have its full operation on our souls.[c]

A good man's last words.—Mr. Benn, of Highgate, had long been the subject of a severe affliction, which at length terminated his valuable life before he had, to human appearance, reached its meridian. The evening before his departure he desired all his children to come into his chamber, and placing them around his dying bed, thus addressed them:—"You all know that I am soon going to be removed from this world to a better; and I trust that you are walking the same road, and will soon follow me. You all know the road; great pains have been taken to show it to you. Where is it to be found?" The children all instantly replied, "In the Bible." The dying parent proceeded: "Keep hold of that chain; it will never mislead you. When you are in doubt whether this or that be right, ask your Bible; see if your Saviour would have done so." Addressing the elder children, he said, "Remember you are to teach the younger; tell them all we have taught you, and try to make it a pleasure." To his eldest son he observed: "When you go into the world, and are exposed to persons who perhaps will ridicule the Saviour's name and the Bible, do not listen to them. Seek that society which will help you to practise your Bible; this book will provide comfort for you when friends forsake you. Every other comfort in this world has its drawback, and is transitory. When you are in pain or suffering, write upon it, 'The road to heaven.'"[d]

13—15. (13) paths of uprightness, figured by a straight line, and bright with the smile of God's favour: level paths. darkness, without any light of God's favour, and under the darkness of His frown.[a] (14) frowardness, *etc.*, lit. *the perverseness of evil:* their own perversity and that of others like themselves. (15) crooked,[b] in contrast with the "level" of *v.*

c "Track for a wheel. The Christian's path is a rut, or definite *tracking*."—*Miller.*

d Whitecross.

a "The *heart* is here, as always, named as the centre and organic basis of the entire life of the soul, as the seat of desire, and the starting point for all personal self-determination. The *soul*, on the contrary, appears as the aggregate and sum total of all the impulses and efforts of the inner man. The former designates the living centre, the latter the totality of the personal life of man."—*Otto Zöckler.*

b Ps. l. 18.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

vv. 10, 11. *R. Warner*, iii. 200; *H. Marriott*, iv. 433.

d R. T. S.

"For our actions let His Word be our guide, and for the events of things and all that concern us, let His good pleasure and wise disposing be our will. Let us give up the rudder of our life into His hand to be steered by Him."—*Abp. Leighton.*

a Ro. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 11; 1 Th. v. 5.

b "The way of sin is labyrinthian and rough,

13. **froward,** a term wh. may be represented by our familiar "wayward."

Wickedness and wisdom (*vv.* 10—22).—I. Wickedness. 1. Its nature—speech corrupt, habit corrupt, heart corrupt, influence corrupt; 2. Doom of wickedness—destruction, extirpation. II. Wisdom—1. Guards the innocent; 2. Delivers the fallen.[c]

Early memories.—Mr. Abbott relates, in his *Mother at Home*, that some time ago a gentleman in one of the most populous cities of America was going to attend a seamen's meeting in the Mariners' Chapel. Directly opposite that place there was a sailors' boarding-house. In the doorway sat a hardy, weather-beaten sailor, with arms folded, and puffing a cigar, watching the people as they gradually assembled for worship. The gentleman walked up to him and said, "Well, my friend, won't you go with us to the meeting?" "No," said the sailor bluntly. The gentleman, who, from the appearance of the man, was prepared for a repulse, mildly replied, "You look, my friend, as though you had seen hard days. Have you a mother?" The sailor raised his head, looked earnestly in the gentleman's face, and made no reply. The gentleman, however, continued: "Suppose your mother were here now, what advice would she give you?" The tears rushed into the eyes of the poor sailor; he tried for a moment to conceal them, but could not; and hastily brushing them away with the back of his rough hand, rose and said, with a voice almost inarticulate through emotion, "I'll go to the meeting." He crossed the street, entered the door of the chapel, and took his seat with the assembled congregation.

16, 17. (16) **strange woman,**[a] though the idea seems to be a woman who has made herself strange, by breaking loose from the purities and duties of the family, reference may also be intended to the fascination of the Phœnician idolaters introduced during Sol.'s reign. **flattereth,** and so overcometh the unsophisticated and inexperienced. Lit. *smooths her words.* (17) **guide . . youth,** her parents or guardians; prob. referring to her husband, whom in her wilfulness she had left. **covenant,** *etc.*, wh. required strict holiness of life.

Perils in the deep (*vv.* 12—19).—The dangers are delineated here in exact order, continuous succession, and increasing power. I. The way of the evil. II. Speaking froward things. III. Leaving the paths of righteousness. IV. Walking in the ways of darkness. V. Rejoicing to do evil. VI. Delight in the frowardness of the wicked.[b]

Temptation.—Gaze not on beauty too much, lest it blast thee; nor too long, lest it blind thee; nor too near, lest it burn thee. If thou like it, it deceives thee; if thou love it, it disturbs thee; if thou hunt after it, it destroys thee. If virtue accompany it, it is the heart's paradise; if vice associate it, it is the soul's purgatory. It is the wise man's bonfire, and the fool's furnace.[c]

18, 19. (18) **inclineth,** sinks down to. She is lost to every interest of virtue and goodness. **dead,** the shades. This may intimate the certain fate of all who yield to her flatteries.[a] Her house is a Hades, where are the shades of those who have perished by her blandishments. (19) **return again,** like death, this is "a bourne fr. wh. no traveller returns." **neither . . life,** there is no resurrection to life and purity.

as well as dark."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

c Dr. Thomas.

"Wisdom without innocency is knavery; innocency without wisdom is foolery: be therefore as wise as serpents, and innocent as doves. The subtilty of the serpent instructs the innocency of the dove; the innocency of the dove corrects the subtilty of the serpent. What God hath joined together, let no man separate."—*Quarles.*

a "Solomon warns his son against that very sin of wh. he was himself afterwards guilty."—*Wordsworth.*

b Dr. W. Arnot.

"Wisdom is the talent of buying virtuous pleasures at the cheapest rate."—*Fielding.*

c Quarles.

He that is not afraid of temptation is not afraid of sin, and he that is not afraid of sin is in danger of being destroyed by it.

a "Everything dies under the influence of (sensual) wickedness,—self-respect, spiritual sensibility, mental freedom, the

freshness, the vigour, and the beauty of life."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

"Example is a living law, whose sway men more than all the written laws obey."—*Sedley.*

"That which is dyed with many dippings is in-grain, and can very hardly be washed out."—*J. Taylor.*

Evil company.—Some insects take their colour from the leaves they feed upon, so our characters will receive a tinge from the books we read and the conversations we listen to. He who means to be a good limner (painter) will be sure to draw after the most excellent copies, and guide every stroke of his pencil by the better pattern that he lays before him; so he who desires that the table of his life may be fair, will be careful to propose the best examples, and will never be content till he equals or excels them. As physicians often order their patients into the country for salubrity of air, so we ought to avoid every place the moral atmosphere of which is polluted by evil example. A desert is better than a debauched companion; for the wildness of the place is but uncheerful, whilst the wildness of bad persons is infectious. "I had a good education at school," a criminal once said, "but it was the education of the streets that ruined me."

20—22. (20) **that**, *etc.*, the advice and warning are given that the youth may, at the outset of his life, be wisely guided in his choice of friends. (21) **dwell**, settle,[a] permanently rest. Change is the attendant on all wickedness, stability attends all goodness. (22) **cut off**, by sudden calamity, as the proper fruitage of their wrong-doing. **rooted out**,[b] fr. the esteem of the good, fr. the sphere of improvement, fr. the realm of mercy, and fr. the domain of hope."

a "To dwell in the land is the highest blessing for the whole people of Israel and for individual men."—*Spk. Com.*

Ex. xx. 12; Le. xxv. 18, xxvi. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 29.

b Job xviii. 16—18.

v. 20. *H. J. Pott*, ii. 425.

v. 21. *J. W. Wickes*, 23.

Influence of example.—Mr. Brainerd informs us, that when among the American Indians, he stopped at a place where there was a great number, and offered to instruct them in the truths of Christianity. "Why," said one of them, "should you desire the Indians to become Christians, seeing the Christians are so much worse than the Indians! The Christians lie, steal, and drink worse than the Indians. They first taught the Indians to be drunk. They steal to so great a degree, that their rulers are obliged to hang them for it; and even that is not enough to deter others from the practice. But none of the Indians were ever hanged for stealing; and yet they do not steal half so much. We will not consent, therefore, to become Christians, lest we should be as bad as they. We will live as our fathers lived, and go where our fathers are, when we die." Notwithstanding that Mr. B. did all he could to explain to them that these were not Christians in heart, and that he did not want them to become such as these, he could not prevail on them to accept his doctrine, but left them, mortified at the thought that the wickedness of some who professed Christianity should produce such prejudices.

The highest point of wisdom is to be wise against ourselves.

c Dr. Cheever.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1, 2. (1) **forget not**, this counsel involves the duty of making effort to remember, frequently recalling, and using well all aids to keep it in mind.[a] **my law**, or my teaching,[b] which is contained in the following verses. "Divine revelation has all the attributes of a law—publicity, authority, practicability." **keep**, or watch over, as one does who guards a vineyard. **commandments**, the particular precepts contained in the general *law*. (2) **length of days**, the sign of Div. favour then so greatly desired,[c] and promised as one of the chief blessings attending

a "Looked at as a book for the education of the young, we may see in each section a 'counsel' to be learnt and remembered, day by day, so as to form a habit of mind by the fre-

obedience. **long life**, Heb. *years of life*, with the emphasis on *life*, in the sense of health and energy. **peace**, as the sign of prosperity. Peace has always been the foremost word in Heb. benedictions.

The philosophy of health and peace (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. Obedience to moral law is a condition of physical health. 1. Physical health requires obedience to the Divine laws of our being ; 2. Obedience to the Divine laws involves the study of them ; 3. A hearty agreement with the Divine will is essential to secure the study of His laws. II. Obedience to moral law a condition of spiritual peace. Peace requires two things. 1. The inward harmony of the soul's powers ; 2. The sense of the Divine favour.[d]

Advantage of religion.—In the life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, he gives us an account of a female servant, belonging to his congregation in London, who was taken ill, of whom, with the assistance of kind friends who knew her, he took care for many years. She was thus saved from the workhouse, and made comfortable to the day of her death. And who was this servant girl? She was one who in early life spent all her wages as a servant in support of her aged and distressed parents, who confidently believed that God would raise her up friends whenever she might need them ; and who gave herself therefore to the duties which her Bible had commanded.[e]

3, 4. (3) **mercy and truth**, these "are, when predicated of man, the designation of those attributes in wh. the normal perfection of his moral conduct towards his neighbour expresses itself."[a] "The two elements of a morally perfect character." **bind . . neck**,[b] like a charm or talisman ; but better far than any such, "the neck is, in Sol.'s writings, the organ and symbol of obedience." **write . . heart**, so as to govern your very motives and feelings. **table**, or *tablet*, Je. xvii. 1 ; 2 Cor. iii. 3. (4) **good understanding**, or intelligence, not, as marg., *good success*. "The mind which is firm and well-balanced."[c]

Soul literature (*v.* 3).—Writing is a very ancient art ; the penmanship of the soul is a writing more ancient and universal. In this art every man is a busy writer. The soul registers every impression made upon it. In comparing soul writing with that of the pen two things are observable. I. Correspondence—both imply readers—both are injurious or useful—both require training. II. Dissimilarity. Soul writing more universal, more useful to Christianity. Note—1. Truth written by the soul in the life is more legible than truth written by the pen ; 2. Is more convincing ; 3. Is more persuasive. Consider—(1) Life is a book ; (2) The book of life should be a Christian book ; (3) It will soon have to be examined.[d]

Speaking the truth.—A little boy, named Augustus, was sent by his mother to get some milk. His brother wanted to go in his stead, and when they got into the street, he tried to force the pitcher from his hand. Augustus, who had been sent by his mother, held the pitcher fast, till at last it fell on the ground, and was broken to pieces between them, and Augustus began to cry bitterly. A woman who was in the street, and saw how it happened, not fearing God, told him to say when he went home that the woman who sold the milk had broken the pitcher. Augustus, wiping his eyes, and looking steadily at the woman, said, "That would be telling a lie ! I will speak the truth, then

quent recurrence of the same impressions."—*Spk. Com.*

b "My direction: the orig. term alludes to throwing out the hand, as if to guide a passenger in his way."—*Miller.*

c Ps. xxi. 4, xci. 16 ; comp. Ex. xx. 12 ; 1 Ki. iii. 14.

d Dr. Thomas.

e Whitecross.

a Otto Zöckler.

b "Like the *totaphoth*, or fillets prescribed by the Law (Ex. xiii. 16)." — *Wordsworth.*

"Take 'mercy and truth' fr. the soul and you take the verdure fr. the fields, and leave them in barrenness, you take the light from the heavens and leave them in sackcloth. Without them the soul is lost,—lost to virtue, nobility, usefulness, and heaven."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

c Ge. xxxix. 2—4 ; Lu. ii. 52.

d Dr. Thomas.

v. 3. *Bp. Hacket*, 862.

"There is nothing which makes so great a difference between one man and another as the practice of calm and serious thinking."—*Abercrombie.*

my mother will not scold me; but, if she should, I would rather be scolded than tell a lie."

5, 6. (5) **trust**, man, being a dependent creature, must trust some one; they alone are truly wise whose trust is in the Lord.[a] **all thine heart**, or wholly, without letting any confidences in things spoil the trust in God. **own understanding**,[b] as if you had no need of a Divine helper. (6) **acknowledge him**, or recognise; have regard to Him and His will. "Recognise Him as the unconditional controller over all thy willing and doing." **direct**, make them straight, even, and prosperous.

Leaning on God (*v.* 5).—I. The trust enjoined. 1. Undivided; 2. Exclusive; 3. Simple; 4. Uniform. II. Its necessity implied. 1. Our understandings are fallible; 2. False guides abound. III. The assurance given. 1. Directions of Providence; 2. Of the Word; 3. Of the Holy Spirit.[c]

A deist confounded.—A deist, on a visit to his friends, among other topics of conversation, enlarged considerably on the sufficiency of reason, separate from Divine assistance, to guide us to happiness. To whom the relative present, who was a farmer, made the following reply:—"Cousin, when you were about fourteen years of age, you were bound apprentice to your trade, and having served the appointed time, you soon became a master, and have now continued in business about twelve years. I wish to know whether you could not prosecute your trade at this time to greater advantage than when you first embarked in it as a master?" The tradesman admitted that his experience in business was of considerable value to him; but asked, what relation that had to the present topic of discourse. The farmer answered, "You were come to the perfect use of your reason, and had been for a long time taught how to manage your trade; and if, therefore, your reason without experience was insufficient to preserve you from many errors, in so plain and easy a business as yours, how can you imagine that it should be sufficient, without Divine assistance, to guide you to heaven?" The deist was confounded.[d]

7, 8. (7) **wise . . eyes**,[a] Pr. xxvii. 2; Ro. xii. 16. **fear**, *etc.*, the fear of God both making us quickly sensitive to what is evil, and fully resolved to shun it whatsoever form it may take. (8) **health**, or, as marg., *medicine*. **navel**,[b] as the *centre* of the body put for the whole body. **marrow**, or moistening.[c] **bones**, the bodily framework.

Self-conceit (*v.* 7).—I. It involves self-ignorance. Let the wisest think—1. Of his knowledge in comparison with what is to be known; 2. In comparison with what ought to be known. II. It obstructs mental improvement. 1. This requires an earnest seeking for knowledge; 2. And this requires a deep sense of the necessity of knowledge. III. It destroys social influence. The elements of social power are intelligence, generosity, truthfulness, humility.[d]

Conceit natural to humanity.—Little localised powers and little narrow streaks of specialised knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise: but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the

a Isa. xxvi. 4.

"The fundamental principle of all religion is an entire self-commitment to the grace and truth of God, with the abandonment of every attempt to attain blessedness by one's own strength or wisdom."—*Otto Zöckler.*

Ps. xxxvii. 3, cxviii. 8, 9; Je. ix. 22.

b "Many might have attained wisdom, had they not thought they had already attained it."—*Seneca.*

c *W. W. Whythe.*

v. 5. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 259; *G. Carlton*, 155; *J. Mason*, i. 224; *R. Warneford*, ii. 349; *W. Gresley*, 275.

d *Dr. Cheever.*

a "There is not a greater enemy to the power of religion, and the fear of God in the heart, than conceitedness of our own wisdom."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Fr. A.-S. *nafla*, fr. *nafu*, nave; often used for the centre of a thing. A depression in the centre of the abdomen.

c "There is, prob., a reference to the local applications used by the surgery of the period as means of healing."—*Spk. Com.*

d *Dr. Thomas.*

ocean ; it keeps it sweet and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. 'When one has had all his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost all his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more. . . . . I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not differ sensibly from a straight line.[e]

v. 7. *Dr. J. Disney*, iv. 85 ; *Dr. R. Monkhouse*, 87; *J. Doughty*, 231.

e Holmes.

9, 10. (9) **honour**, *etc.*, by making the prescribed free-will and thank offerings.[a] More generally, recognise God's hand in all temporal blessings, and be thankful to Him. **substance**, or capital, stock. **increase**, the revenue derived from it. (10) **barns**, or storehouses of various kinds. **presses**, or wine-vats, into which the produce of the vineyards and oliveyards would be carried. **burst out**, reference is to the bursting of the grape under the treading, not to any breaking of the over-full vats.[b]

Capital and profit (*v.* 9).—A grievous malady infests mercantile life at the present day, and shows itself in these two kindred features. 1. A morbid forwardness to commence business without capital : that is, an effort to reap an increase while you have no substance to reap it from. 2. A morbid forwardness to prosecute business to an enormous extent upon a very limited capital ; that is, an effort to reap more increase than your substance can fairly bear.[c]

Trade morality.—The Rev. John Parkhurst, the author of the Hebrew and Greek Lexicons, having a tenant who fell behind in the payment of his rent, which was £500 per annum, it was represented to his landlord that it was owing to his being over-rented. A new valuation being made, it was agreed that, for the future, the rent should not be more than £450. Mr. Parkhurst justly inferring that if the farm was then too dear, it must necessarily have been always too dear, unasked, and of his own accord, immediately struck off £50 from the commencement of the lease ; and instantly refunded all that he had previously received more than £450 per annum.[d]

a Ex. xxii. 29, xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26 ; De. xxvi. 2; Mal. iii. 10 ; Lu. xiv. 13.

"'Good, the more communicated, more abundant grows.'"—*Milton.*

b Comp. Joel iv. 18 ; Am. ix. 13.

c Dr. Arnot.

v. 9. *C. Clark*, 107 ; *W. Reading*, iv. 216 ; *J. C. Miller*, 291.

"Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them, and the evils bear patiently and sweetly ; for this day only is ours ; —we are dead to yesterday, and are not born to to-morrow."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

d Whitecross.

11, 12, (11) **despise not**, shrink not from.[a] **be weary**, or loathe, abhor. **his correction**, wh. is always paternal, and the means to gracious ends. (12) **whom . . correcteth**,[b] He. xii. 5—8. **delighteth**,[c] love making the father strong to bless the child with needed corrections.[d]

The bearing of suffering on conversion (*v.* 11).—Suffering is altered in character as soon as we enter into possession of the Divine favour. It then forms a part of the plan of Divine love. Suffering has not ceased to bear its character of chastisement. I. It acts as a dyke against the overflow of evil ; it incessantly restrains and thrusts it back. II. Suffering is not a blessing simply because it acts as a restraint ; but also, and especially, because it acts as a preparative. It is a bridle, and also a spur, urging us towards the cross.[e]

Sanctifying power of affliction.—It is by affliction chiefly that

a "Turn not with impatient exacerbation and violent revulsion from the discipline of Divine chastisement, wh. will prove thy obedience."—*Wordsworth.*

Job v. 17.

b "From this passage it appears that every Jewish child was taught to acknowledge another Father in heaven chas-

tising him, even as he had been chastised by his earthly father." —*Spk. Com.*

c "For whom Jehovah loves He corrects, and, as a father, does the son a favour," so *Miller* trans. the passage.

d Comp. He. ii. 10, v. 8, 9.

e Dr. E. de Pressensè.

f Dr. Johnson.

the heart of man is purified, and that the thoughts are fixed on a better state. Prosperity, alloyed and imperfect as it is, has power to intoxicate the imagination, to fix the mind upon the present scene, to produce confidence and elation, and to make him who enjoys affluence and honours forget the hand by which they were bestowed. It is seldom that we are otherwise, than by affliction, awakened to a sense of our imbecility, or taught to know how little all our acquisitions can conduce to safety or to quiet; and how justly we may ascribe to the superintendence of a higher power those blessings which, in the wantonness of success, we considered as the attainments of our policy or courage.*f*

13, 14. (13) happy, better, *blessed.*[a] wisdom, or goodness, the true wisdom. getteth, Heb. *draweth out*, from God's stores of truth, and the experiences of life. Draws out, as metals by digging. (14) merchandise, traffic in it.[b] Some prefer the word "accumulation." fine gold, the technical word used for the native gold, in the nugget or the dust.

Spiritual merchandise (*v.* 14).—I. The trade. 1. The assets, capital, stock; 2. The receipts, present joys, promises; 3. The liabilities, obligations; 4. The accounts, books, correspondence. II. Its advantages. 1. The losses, indolence, negligence, timidity; 2. The profits, large, sure, enduring. III. Its requisites. 1. Promptness; 2. Perseverance; 3. Regularity; 4. Attention.[c]

A poor man's wisdom.—An old man, of very acute physiognomy, answering to the name of Jacob Wilmot, was brought before the Police Court. His clothes looked as if they might have been bought second-hand in his youthful prime, for they had suffered more from the rubs of the world than the proprietor himself. "What business?" "None; I'm a traveller." "A vagabond, perhaps?" "You are not far from wrong: travellers and vagabonds are about the same thing. The difference is that the latter travel without money, and the former without brains." "Where have you travelled?" "All over the Continent." "For what purpose?" "Observation." "What have you observed?" "A little to commend, much to censure, and very much to laugh at." "Humph! what do you commend?" "A handsome woman that will stay at home, an eloquent preacher that will preach short sermons, a good writer that will not write too much, and a fool that has sense enough to hold his tongue." "What do you censure?" "A man who marries a girl for her fine clothing, a youth who studies law or medicine while he has got the use of his hands, and the people who elect a drunkard to office." "What do you laugh at?" "I laugh at a man who expects his position to command that respect which his personal qualities and qualifications do not merit." He was dismissed.[d]

15, 16. (15) rubies, Heb. *penninim*, either red coral, or more prob. pearls. all .. desire, lit. *all thy delights.* (16) in .. hand,[a] she is valuable in herself, and also in the things that she brings with her, 1 Ki. iii. 11–13.

Length of days in the hand of wisdom (*v.* 16).—I. It is not a uniform experience, that a man lives long who lives well, such a rule would not be suitable to the present dispensation. II. It is true that all wickedness acts as a shortener of life, and all goodness as its lengthener; but other elements enter, and complicate

a O the blessedness of the man! as Ps. i. 1.

b There appears here an evident allusion to the new commerce of Sol.'s time with Ophir, etc.

c W. W. Whythe.

v. 13. *J. Morgan*, i. 201; *C. Mayo*, 1; *W. Gresley*, 297.

"It hath pleased the Holy Ghost to keep the names of the penman of many parts of the Scripture in everlasting obscurity; for He borrows no countenance or authority unto anything that proceeds by inspiration from Himself from the names of men." —*Dr. Owen.*

d Haven.

a "The right hand in the Bible everywhere means one's highest instrumentality or agency."—*Miller.*

v. 15. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 513.

the result, and slightly veil the interior law. Take as an illustration, drunkenness, which is selected by the agents of assurance societies for their calculations. Other sins, if human eyes could trace them, would give the same results.[b]

The worth of wisdom.—If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom, a person is like a ship without a pilot,—in danger to split upon rocks. The price of wisdom is above rubies. The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red fiery colour. It is reported of one of the kings of India, he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendour, that he might be seen by it in the dark; but wisdom casts a more sparkling colour than the ruby: it makes us shine as angels.[c]

17. ways, properly *highways*, main roads. The ways along wh. she will lead those who devote themselves to her. **pleasantness,** "All the enjoyments and entertainments of sense are not comparable to the pleasure wh. gracious souls have in common with God and doing good."[a] **paths,** *bypaths*, smaller side roads. **peace,**[b] such as may ensure peace: but peace may here mean "prosperity."

Connection between holiness and happiness (*v.* 17).—I. State the nature of holiness: it is the work of the Holy Spirit; involves change of heart and life. II. Consider the certain connection between holiness and happiness. 1. It is established by the deductions of reason; 2. Also in the Holy Scriptures; 3. Founded on experience. III. The reflection which this subject awakens. Learn how false are the estimates which the ungodly form of religion when they represent it as unfriendly to happiness.[c]

Wisdom is like the sun.—

So Wisdom made her favourite wise of heart,
And led the loved one through all holy spheres
And dwellings of seraphic bliss, and homes
Of perfect pleasure: even as the sun
Wades through the golden waters of the world
Up to the top point of the tower of time,
Then steep descends, down to the lowest nook
Of furthest space.[d]

18. tree of life, as Ge. ii. 9, iii. 22; Re. ii. 7, xxii. 2. Personification of wisdom as a fruitful tree giving nourishment and immortality. But the former personification of wisdom as a queen remains in the verse, and it is the queen, not the tree, on wh. we are to gain and keep our hold.

The blessedness of wisdom (*v.* 18).—Wisdom—I. Endows with the best wealth. 1. The former cannot be enjoyed without the latter; 2. Has a very transitory existence compared with the latter: 3. Is not essential to the blessedness of the latter. II. It contributes to the prolongation of life. III. It secures happiness in all departments of life. IV. It restores to all forfeited privileges.[a]

The sympathy of wisdom.—

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,

b Dr. Arnot.

v. 16. *T. Adams*, 858; *J. Abernethy*, iii. 140; *Dr. W. Lupton*, 298; *T. Wheatland*, 339.

c J. Watson.

a Mat. Henry.

"Her ways are the ways of chastity, justice, truthfulness, holy affections, benevolent activities, and communings with the Great God, and from these pleasure must inevitably spring."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

b Matt. xi. 29, 30.

c C. G Ibert.

v. 17. *Dr. T. Horton*, 216; *Bp. E. Hopkins*, iv. 354; *T. Manton*, iv. 1038; *Dr. R. South*, ii. 404; *Dr. I. Barrow*, i. 1; *Bp. Beveridge*, v. 195; *L. Sterne*, iv. 153.

d Bailey.

a Dr. Thomas.

v. 18. *T. Manton*, v. 1037; *T. Dale*, v. 311.

Nobody giving any attention to old Diogenes while discoursing of virtue and philosophy, he fell to singing a funny song; and multitudes crowded to hear him. "Ye gods!" he said, "how much more is folly admired than wisdom!"

In childhood, from this solitary being,
This helpless wanderer, have perchance received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were.[b]

b Wordsworth.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without adversity.

19, 20. (19) **the Lord**, Sol. now turns attention fr. what wisdom is to man, and shows how it is related to God. **founded**, or created. Advancing knowledge of the earth's crust, and history, should deeply impress on us the wonderful wisdom of God in arranging it for the abode of man.[a] **established**, or prepared, set firm. (20) **depths**, *comp.* Ge. i. 7, vii. 11. The expression may well refer to the great geological changes. **clouds . . dew**,[b] this is not a strictly scientific statement, as the dew is formed by the condensation of the atmosphere. But we familiarly speak of the "falling dew." Dew is of exceeding value in hot countries.

a "We are raised by science to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all His works."—*Lord Brougham.*

b Job xxxvi. 27, 28.

Wisdom the source and sovereign of worlds (*v.* 19).—These words give us two ideas of the universe. I. That it is organised by wisdom. This opposed—1. To the eternity of the universe; 2. To the contingent origin of the universe. II. That it is organised by one Being. 1. The unity of the universe shows this; 2. The Word of God declares this.[c]

The dew.—If clouds are necessary to produce rain, sunshine is an essential to the formation of dew. A dewy morning only follows a day whose sun has well warmed up the earth. It is necessary that the heat should readily radiate into the surrounding atmosphere by night. When the surface of the earth thus cools down more rapidly than the incumbent air about it, and when the air is saturated with moisture, then, by the contact of temperatures, the air becomes unable to retain its moisture, and yields its sprays and vapours to be shaped by a natural law, the same which rounded the world out of chaos and orbed the universe; and then what was invisible becomes visible in drops of settling dew. So, whenever dew is seen to fall, there must first have been a flowing down of sunshine in the day, and then a responsive current of warmth uprising in the night toward the region whence it came. The earth receives and yet returns the heat the heavens gave, and as if to reward such gratitude, the dew descends to refresh and gladden its beseeching and thankful breast. So, when people's hearts are hard, and dry, and desolate, it may be because they lack responsiveness to heaven's gifts—for want of gratitude for the light and privilege which have shone upon them all their days. Teachers, if they would see their classes bright and happy, and parents, if they would have glowing summer in their homes, and have young hearts themselves, should be open-souled and thankful, and teach the children how to be grateful for daily blessings. Then would sun-warmth from the better world be taken in through the gauze of form, and task, and habit, and fashion; then, because each heart would be flower instead of flint, grass instead of granite, fruit instead of fossil; then would the pearly dewdrops of glory glitter all over a school and all through a family, like an immortal morning.[d]

c Dr. Thomas.

d A. Clark.

"The very sight of evil is dangerous, and it is hard for the heart not to run into those sins to which the eye and the ear are inured. Not out of love, but out of custom, we fall into some offences. How many have fallen into a fashion of swearing, scoffing, drinking, out of the usual practice of others, as those that live in a pestilential air are infected by diseases."—*Bp. Hall.*

"A rooted habit becomes a governing principle. Every lust we entertain deals with us as Delilah did with Samson: not only robs us of our strength, but leaves us fast bound."—*Tillotson.*

21, 22. (21) **them**, *i.e.* the wisdom and discretion of the

second clause. depart . . eyes, keep them, by never letting them be out of sight. Watch them as you would priceless jewels. (22) life, or health, vitality, vigour. grace, or, like a gracious ornament.[a] Religious principles give a refinement and gracefulness to character.

Fidelity to principle (*vv.* 21—26).—The advantages connected with fidelity to the ethics of godliness are here sketched, and they are—I. Life. II. Ornament. III. Safety. IV. Courage.[b]

The office and the man.—Alexander the Great once degraded an officer of distinction, by removing him to an inferior situation. He, some time after, asked the officer how he liked his new office. "It is not the station," replied the officer, "which gives consequence to the man, but the man to the station. No situation can be so trifling as not to require wisdom and virtue in the performance of its duties." The monarch was so pleased with this answer, that he restored him to his former rank.[c]

23, 24. (23) not stumble, so far from falling, you shall not even stumble.[a] (24) liest down, *etc.*, comp. Ps. iii. 5.[b] afraid, bec. you will have no consequences of sin to be afraid of. sweet, as is that of the innocent child.

Rules of sleep.—There is no fact more clearly established in the physiology of man than this, that the brain expands its energies and itself during the hours of wakefulness, and that these are recuperated during sleep. If the recuperation does not equal the expenditure, the brain withers—this is insanity. Thus it is that, in early English history, persons who were condemned to death by being prevented from sleeping, always died raving maniacs; thus it is also that those who are starved to death become insane,—the brain is not nourished, and they cannot sleep. The practical inferences are three. 1st. Those who think most, who do most brain-work, require most sleep. 2nd. That time "saved" from necessary sleep is infallibly destructive to mind, body, and estate. 3rd. Give yourself, your children, your servants—give all that are under you, the fullest amount of sleep they will take, by compelling them to go to bed at some regular, early hour, and to rise in the morning the moment they awake: and within a fortnight, Nature, with almost the regularity of the rising sun, will unloose the bonds of sleep the moment enough repose has been secured for the wants of the system. This is the only safe and sufficient rule; and as to the question how much sleep any one requires, each must be a rule for himself.—great Nature will never fail to write it out to the observer under the regulations just given.[c]

25, 26. (25) sudden fear, such will come, but the godly man need have no fears in such times. desolation, *etc.*,[a] in this Bk. of Prov. sudden calamity is regarded as a usual mode of Div. judgment on the wicked. (26) thy confidence, the thought of "Him who keepeth Israel" shall comfort you and bring you peace. being taken, either in a trap, or taken away by the floods of calamity.

Confidence in God the true safeguard from temptation (*v.* 26).—I. Do not say God is your confidence, if He be only your dread. II. There is a trust which only the unreconciled experience. III. Confidence in God is not to be attained by a wish whenever you please. IV. True confidence has a power for good on the life.[b]

a Pr. i. 9.

b *Dr. Thomas,* *v.* 21. *G. J. Zollikoffer,* ii. 316; *J. Miller,* 103.

"Most certainly that superior wisdom which corrects, reproves, and informs man against his own inclination, can be no part of himself."—*Fénelon.*

c *R. T. S.*

a "Thou shalt ever go under a double guard, the 'peace of God' within thee, and the 'power of God' without thee."—*Trapp.*

b Le. xxvi. 6; Ps. iv. 8.

"Come sleep, O sleep! the certain knot of peace, the baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe; the poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release, the impartial judge between the high and low."—*Sir Philip Sydney.*

c *Dr. Forbes Winslow.*

a Pr. i. 27; Ps. lxxiii. 19.

b *Dr. Arnot.*

"When wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together they presage the soul's happiness." — *J. Watson.*

Faith the link between God and man.—
Religion is the true philosophy!
Faith is the last great link 'twixt God and man.
There is more wisdom in a whispered prayer
Than in the ancient lore of all the schools;
The soul upon its knees holds God by the hand,
Worship is wisdom as it is in heaven;
"I do believe! Help Thou my unbelief!"
Is the last greatest utterance of the soul.[c]

27—29. (27) **withhold . . due**, the godly man need have only one anxiety, that of "doing good," all the good he can. Due, not as having business claims, but the claims wh. belong ever to the suffering and the needy.[a] (28) **say not**, *comp.* Jas. ii. 15, 16, v. 4. "Promptly fulfil all obligations both of justice and charity."[b] (29) **devise**, plan and put in practice. **securely**, without care or suspicion. Not for a moment thinking you have evil designs. So do not abuse confidence.

Beneficence (*vv.* 26—29).—I. Human beneficence has its claimants. 1. What you have is given in truth; 2. It is given for distribution. II. Human beneficence is limited by incapacity. III. Human beneficence should ever be prompt in its services. 1. Because the postponement of any duty is a sin in itself; 2. Because the neglect of a benevolent impulse is injurious to self; 3. Because the claimant may suffer seriously by a delay of your help. IV. Human beneficence excludes all unkindness of heart.[c]

Marshal Turenne.—The celebrated Marshal Turenne observed in his army an officer of distinguished birth but very ill-mounted. He invited him to dinner, and, when the repast was over, took him aside and said to him in the kindest manner, "I have a favour to ask of you, sir; you may perhaps find it difficult to grant, but I trust you will not refuse your general. I am old," continued he, "and even a little infirm, and spirited horses fatigue me; I have seen you have one on which I think I should be more at my ease: and if I were not afraid to ask so great a sacrifice, I would propose that you should give it to me." The officer replied by a profound bow, and went immediately for his horse, which he led into Turenne's stable. The next day the general sent him one of the best and handsomest horses in the army.[d]

30. **strive not**, either in private contention or public litigation. **without cause**, or to no purpose. The litigious spirit is unsuitable to the good and godly man. It leads men to make occasions of quarrel when really there are none.

Strife.—Look at strife in two aspects. I. As a principle inherent in the soul. II. As a principle liable to perversion.[a]

Contention.—Two learned physicians and a plain, honest countryman, happening to meet at an inn, sat down to dinner together. A dispute presently arose between the two doctors on the nature of aliment, which proceeded to such a height, and was carried on with so much fury, that it spoiled their meal, and they parted extremely indisposed. The countryman, in the meantime, who understood not the cause, though he heard the quarrel, fell heartily to his meat, gave thanks to God, digested it well, returned in the strength of it to his honest labour, and

c Bigg.

"O God, I have made an ill use of Thy mercies, if I have not learnt to be content with Thy corrections."—*Bp. Hall.*

a Prob. it expresses, in this bold form of speech, the great Scriptural thought that the so-called possession of wealth is but a stewardship: that the true owners of what we call our own are those to whom, with it, we may do good."—*Spk. Com.*

b Fausset.

c Dr. Thomas.

v. 27. *J. Fisher*, 190; *J. Seed*, ii. 1; *Bp. Porteus*, iii. 359; *Dr. W. Cooper*, i. 142; *R. Woodward*, 36.

"On folly's lips eternal talkings dwell; wisdom speaks little, but that little well; so lengthening shades the sun's decline betray, but shorter shadows mark meridian day."—*Bishop.*

d Whitecross.

a Dr. Thomas.

If God afflict you, let not impatience add to the affliction.

"Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of Christian graces; to sit where He places us, to be what He would have us to be, and as long as He pleases."—*Cecil.*

at evening received his wages. "Is there not sometimes," adds Bishop Horne, "as much difference between the polemical and the practical Christian?"[b]

31, 32. (31) **envy not,** since the bad man is often prosperous in this world, the godly man is tempted to envy him.[a] **oppressor,**[b] *man of mischief*, or rapacious man. (32) **froward,** or one bent out of right ways. **secret,** Ps. xxv. 14. **righteous,** better, the *straightforward*.

The oppressor (*v.* 31).—I. His character is not to be envied. 1. Because envy is in itself an evil; 2. Because there is nothing in the oppressor to be desired. II. His conduct is not to be followed.[c]

Universality of envy.—Envy is a weed that grows in all soils and climates, and is no less luxuriant in the country than in the court; is not confined to any rank of men or extent of fortune, but rages in the breasts of all degrees. Alexander was not prouder than Diogenes: and it may be, if we would endeavour to surprise it in its most gaudy dress and attire, and in the exercise of its full empire and tyranny, we should find it in schoolmasters and scholars, or in some country lady, or the knight, her husband; all which ranks of people more despise their neighbours than all the degrees of honour in which courts abound; and it rages as much in a sordid affected dress as in all the silks and embroideries which the excess of the age and the folly of youth delight to be adorned with. Since, then, it keeps all sorts of company, and wriggles itself into the liking of the most contrary natures and dispositions, and yet carries so much poison and venom with it, that it alienates the affections from heaven and raises rebellion against God Himself, it is worth our utmost care to watch it in all its disguises and approaches, that we may discover it in its first entrance, and dislodge it before it procures a shelter or retiring-place to lodge and conceal itself.[d]

33, 34. (33) **in the house,** abiding constantly with them. "God is angry with the wicked every day." **habitation,** though it be but a cottage, or a tent. (34) **scorneth,**[a] Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pe. v. 5. God precisely meets man, adapting His dealings with him to man's disposition. **lowly,** who are willing to receive Div. instructions.[b]

Fidelity to conscience.—A Christian youth was in the service of a farmer, who wished him to work on the Lord's day more than was necessary for feeding the cattle, watering the horses, and such like. The youth remonstrated, and succeeded in getting time to attend the house of God. But one Sunday, much against his will, he was compelled to work upon a part of the farm on a small island near the coast. The farmer and a farm servant went with him. A squall came on and upset the boat; all were thrown into the deep water. As they were clinging to the boat, an ill-timed jest was made at the conscious feelings of the youth. "I say, Jim," said the farmer, "where's your religion now? Will it help you to swim ashore?" "My trust," replied Jim, "is in my God and Saviour; if it is His will, I shall get safe to land." At this moment a wave rolled in, turned the farmer over, and he sank to rise no more. The same wave bore one of the oars of the boat under Jim's arm, thus enabling him to reach the shore. One of the many illustrations, even in this world, of the sayings

b Whitecross.

a Ps. lxxiii. 3.

b "The good old rule sufficeth them, the simple plan, that they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can."—*W. Wordsworth.*

c Dr. Thomas.

vv. 31, 32. *T. Manton*, iv. 1044.

d Ld. Clarendon.

"To pooh-pooh what we are never likely to possess is wonderfully easy. The confirmed celibate is loudest in his denunciations of matrimony. In Æsop, it is the tailless fox that advocates the disuse of tails. It is the grapes we cannot reach that we call sour."—*Æneas Sage.*

a Ps. xviii. 26.

"God will scorn them, and lay them open to the scorn of the world."—*Mat. Henry.*

b "Humility is both a grace and vessel to receive grace."—*Trapp.*

v. 33. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. p. 3, 351; *Dr. J. Orton*, ii. 51; *J. Miller*, 115.

v. 34. *Sir M. Hale*, ii. 126.

"Well may we think our substance due where we owe ourselves."—*Bp Hall.*

of the wise man, "Surely He scorneth the scorners; but He giveth grace unto the lowly."[c]

35. wise, made wise for life and eternity by heeding the teachings of the true Wisdom. glory,[a] a comprehensive term for all honour and good. promotion of, or exalteth. fools, who are wicked more than foolish.

The rewards of wisdom and folly (*v.* 35).—I. Distinguish the two characters. II. Declare their proper award. III. The effect of wisdom on our condition in the eternal world. There the conduct of all will be rightly appreciated; then wisdom and folly will appear in their true light. Recommend—1. A retrospect of your past lives; 2. A prospective view of futurity.[b]

Massillon.—Massillon, an eminent French preacher, in the first sermon he ever delivered, found, upon his getting into the pulpit, the whole audience in a disposition no way favourable to his intentions; their nods, whispers, or drowsy behaviour, showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so barren. However, he soon changed the disposition of the audience by his manner of beginning. "If," said he, "a cause the most important that could be conceived were to be tried at the bar before qualified judges; if this cause interested ourselves in particular; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the event; if the most eminent counsel were employed on both sides; and if we had heard from our infancy of this undetermined trial; would you not all sit with due attention and warm expectation to the pleadings on both sides? Would not all your hopes and fears be suspended upon the final decision? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause of much greater importance before you; a cause where not one nation but all the world are spectators; tried not before a fallible tribunal, but before the awful throne of Heaven; where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subjects of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery; where the cause is still undetermined; but, perhaps the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last for ever; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of salvation. I plead the cause of Heaven, and yet I am scarcely attended to."[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) ye children, the pupils or hearers of the teacher of wisdom are so called in affectionate earnestness. The expression suggests that the counsels are urged with a paternal authority.[a] of a father, who had been a son, and knew, by happy experience, the value of parental instruction and discipline.[b] understanding, spiritual discernment of that which is right and good. (2) good doctrine, oral teaching received by me, which I hand over to you. He received the substance of it from his father. law, or practical directions for the guidance of life.

A religious home (*vv.* 1—4).—I. The love of a religious home. 1. Natural love: 2. Spiritual love. II. The training of a religious home. The teaching was—1. Worth retaining; 2. Practical; 3. Quickening. III. The influence of a religious home

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c *R. T. S.*

a Da. xii. 2, 3.

"As is our character so are we before God and His universe, and so will be our destiny in the great hereafter."—*D. Thomas, D.D.*

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 35. *J. Bulguy, L.L.*

"You shall have him ever inquiring into the estates of his equals and betters, wherein he is not more desirous to hear all, than loth to hear anything overgood; and if just report relate aught better than he would, he redoubles the question, as being hard to believe what he likes not. Whom he dares not openly backbite, nor wound with a direct censure, he strikes smoothly with an over-cold praise."—*Bishop Hall.*

c *R. T. S.*

a Comp. Ps. xxxiv. 11; 1 Th. ii. 11; 1 Jno. ii. 12, 13, 18.

b "The author designs to represent himself as a son, and the object of his father's counsels and warnings. The aim was to present the example of the one son before the many sons."—*Otto Zöckler.*

For this, two reasons. 1. The susceptibility of childhood ; 2. The potency of parental affection.[c]

A mother's commendation.—Shortly after a number of people appeared, supporting a young man upon horseback, who had been mortally wounded. His mother walked on before, quite frantic with grief, clapping her hands, and enumerating the good qualities of her son. "He never told a lie," said the disconsolate mother ; and as her wounded son was carried in at the gate, bitterly did she exclaim, "He never told a lie,—no, never." The heathen mother considered truth so important, that whatever other good qualities her son might possess, the greatest of all, in her eyes, was his veracity.[d]

c *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 1. *R. Cecil*, iii. 145; *Sydney Smith*, 552; *Dr. W. B. Collyer*, 334.

d *Mungo Park.*

3, 4. (3) father's son, specially favoured son, because indicated by God as the successor to the throne.[a] tender, in sense of gentle, docile. only beloved, or the darling of my mother, so receiving her special care.[b] (4) he taught me, prob. Dav. did not leave the instruction of Sol. to others, but himself gave instruction in the first principles of truth and duty.

Filial recollections (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. Of a father's care. II. Of a mother's tenderness. III. Of early parental instruction. IV. How do we regard these things now? V. All this care, tenderness, and instruction are for our advantage. VI. Our present treatment of parents will embitter or gladden future recollections.

Maternal influence.—"I look back to the period when, standing on the side of a river, a broad river, when about to shake hands with a beloved mother, and hear a long farewell. I still, still think that I hear her pleading ; I still think that I hear that gentle voice saying, 'O my son! my son! make me happy by promising me a promise.' I still think I see the tears trickling over her venerable cheeks, which I saw again only a few weeks ago, when I bade her a last earthly farewell. I still think I see that venerable form pleading with a naughty son, when he refused to promise that he would read the Word of God every morning and every evening. When I look back to that period (and all my feelings are still the same), I see the spot where we stood ; I still imagine I hear the tones of her voice, though now her lips tremble with age when she speaks ; I still think I see her countenance brightening up, when I said, 'Yes, mother, I shall do what you wish.' In obedience to that promise, I read the Word of God, and God poured out His Spirit from on high. My dark heart was enlightened ; I saw the Saviour—that Saviour that died for me ; and from that day to the present, I have lived in the faith of the Gospel."[c]

a 1 Chr. xxii. 9, xxviii. 5, 6.

b "Noteworthy is the prominence given to the mother's share in training the child. Among the Israelites and Egyptians alone, of the nations of the whole world, was the son's reverence for the mother placed side by side with that which he owed to his father."—*Spk. Com.*

"The home is the most potent institution in the world. Parental roofs are more influential institutions than cathedrals. 'The old arm chair' where parents sat is mightier to me than any pulpits ever have been or ever will be."—*David Thomas, D.D.*

"For the term *only* comp. Ge. xxii. 2, 12; Jno. i. 3; Eph. i. 6.

c *Dr. Moffat.*

5, 6. (5) get,[a] as a permanent possession, a ruling principle. understanding, discretion to choose between the right and the wrong, *discernment*. forget not, according to the fixedness of the attention will be the safe holding in memory. decline not, turn not back from. Sol.'s own story painfully illus. the danger against wh. he guards others. Temptations to turn from the principles established in a pious youth-time are sure to come. (6) forsake her not, wisdom is here personified as a queen. She represents the "chief good" for man[b] (ch. iii. 13—18). preserve thee, like a watchman. She stands sentry over us.[c]

The summum bonum (*vv.* 5—9).—I. Here is the summum

a "Lit. *buy*. An imitation of the exclamation of a merchant who is offering his wares."—*Umbreit.*

b "The 'chief good for man' must be intellectual, or adapted to the higher and nobler part of our nature: attainable by all, of

bonum described. 1. The possession; 2. The application of the highest knowledge. II. Here is the summum bonum sought. 1. Attentively; 2. Constantly; 3. Lovingly; 4. Supremely. III. Here is the summum bonum enjoyed. 1. As a guardian; 2. A patron; 3. Rewarder.[d]

Avoiding temptation.—It is said that a Quaker, having to engage a coachman, was anxious to secure a competent and trusty person. Three candidates presented themselves, and the same question was put to each. "Friend, how near canst thou drive to the edge of a precipice without upsetting the coach?" "Within a foot," was the reply of the first. "Within an inch," was the reply of the second. The third, who was the successful candidate, answered, "I always endeavour to keep as far off from a precipice as possible." The moral is plain.

7—9. (7) **wisdom . . thing,** lit. *as the height of wisdom get wisdom:*[a] or, the beginning of wisdom is to get wisdom. **thy getting,** whatever thou seekest to acquire. **understanding,** here as usual in the sense of practical discernment, such apprehension of life as will help a man to guide his way aright through it. (8) **exalt her,** set her high in thine esteem. Extol her as thy greatest good.[b] **promote thee,** responding by doing for us what it is in our heart and effort to do for her.[c] **embrace her,** as a loved and trusted wife, with fond affection. (9) **an ornament,** ch. i. 9. **deliver,** or compass thee with, for thy protection. Wisdom shall be to thee beauty and strength.

The principal thing (*v.* 7).—I. What this wisdom is not—mere knowledge, scientific, metaphysical, etc. Many have this kind of knowledge who are not wise unto salvation. II. What it is—religion in the broad and personal sense. Fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom. III. Why the principal thing. 1. We may have all else and not be saved; 2. We may have none else but this, and then shall be saved; 3. It is the principal thing in life, death, and for ever.

Wisdom.—Knowledge is the treasure of the mind, but discretion is the key to it, without which it is useless. There are no such safeguards as virtue and wisdom. The one secures the soul, the other the estate and body. "Fortune first fools the man she means to foil." She dares not, she cannot hurt us while we continue wise. Discretion sways the stars and fate. The witty Horace says:—

> "In short, the wise is only less than Jove,
> Rich, free, and glorious; nay, a king above
> All earthly kings."

Sin can no more be without folly than fire without dryness or water without moisture. It is folly that opens the door and lets it into the heart and retains it there.

10—12. (10) **years . . many,** or, "my words shall grow greater to thee through years of life."[a] **life,** the word here used is a plural, as if Sol. embraced in thought the life that now is and that wh. is to come. (11) **led thee,** caused thee to tread, referring to childhood. Now that youth was come, Sol. was anxious that his son should go willingly in the way in which childhood's steps had been led. **right paths,** or "paths of loveliness," or righteouness. (12) **not to be straitened,** there shall be ample room: in thy life-journey the path shall be

whatever sex, age, or mental conformation; unimpaired by distribution; independent of the circumstances of time or place; incapable of participation to excess; composed essentially of the same elements as the good to be enjoyed in a future state."—*Quoted by Dr. Thomas.*

c Miller.

d Dr. Thomas.

a Miller.

"The highest thing is wisdom. Get wisdom."—*Otto Zöckler.*

b The LXX. render "place thou stakes about her," to lift her up as if she were a tree.

Bertheau thinks the idea of the word used is, *enclosing with a wall*, suggesting a loving clasp and embrace.

c Comp. Gal. vi. 8. *v.* 7. *W. Strong*, 493; *Bp. Wilkins*, 197; *Dr. T. Coney*, iii. 105; *J. Mason*, iv. 259; *W. Langhorne*, i. 105; *Bp. Horne*, v. 323; *B. C. Snowden*, 321; *Bossuet*, xvii. 1; *Dr. W. Dodd*, i. 123.

Wisdom is of two kinds; there are those who are deemed wise, and those who are really such; viz., those who are wise "after the flesh," and those who are wise "after the Spirit."

a Miller.

b Ps. xviii. 36, xci. 11.

"On the great highway of life the only free traveller is he who is spiritually wise. Others are so bur-

clear and open, and obstacles shall disappear.[b] runnest, in thy times of activity or haste.

The path of wisdom (*vv.* 10—13).—1. The path of wisdom is known only by teaching. 1. By precept; 2. By example. II. The path of wisdom is fraught with true blessings. I. Longevity; 2. Freedom; 3. Safety. III. It requires the most vigorous steadfastness.[c]

Shining more and more.—"If you only have candlelight, bless God for it, and He will give you starlight; when you have got starlight, praise God for it, and He will give you moonlight; when you have got moonlight, rejoice in it, and He will give you sunlight; and when you have got sunlight, praise Him still more, and He will make the light of your sun as the light of seven days, for the Lord Himself shall be the light of your spirit."[d]

13. take fast hold, strictly, "fasten, and do not let slack."[a] Hold the lessons of wisdom with a firm and unrelaxing tenacity. keep her, or keep watch over her. thy life, exactly, "she is herself thy life."

Hold fast (*v.* 13).—I. To what? Instruction, *i.e.* in the truth that makes wise to salvation—heavenly wisdom. II. When? At once—more especially in the time of youth. Youth the time for learning, books, trade, etc. III. How? With desperate earnestness, firm grasp; continue holding, by prayer, thought, etc. IV. Why? She is thy life. 1. She will bless thy present life; 2. Save thee to life eternal.

The advantage of wisdom.—During a violent storm in November, 1821, a vessel, passing through the English Channel, was driven on shore near Beachy Head, and the whole of the crew being washed overboard, four escaped from the wreck, only to be delivered, as they thought, to a more lingering and fearful, from its being a more gradual and equally inevitable, death; for having in the darkness of the night been cast upon the breakers, they found, when they had climbed up the highest of these rocks, that the waves were rapidly encroaching on their asylum, and they doubted not that, when the tide should be at its height, the whole range would be entirely covered with water. The darkness of the night prevented anything being seen beyond the spot upon which they stood, and which was continually decreasing by the successive encroachments of each advancing wave. The violence of the storm left no hope that their feeble voices, even if raised to the uttermost, could be heard on shore; and they knew that amidst the howling of the blast their cries could reach no other ear than that of God. What human arm could give assistance in such a situation? Even if their distresses were known, how vain were the help of man! The circle of their existence here seemed gradually lessening before their eyes; their little span of earth gradually contracting to their destruction: already had they receded to the highest points and already the infuriated waters followed them, flinging over their devoted heads the foremost waves, as heralds of their speedily approaching dissolution. At this moment one of these wretched men—while they were debating whether they should not, in this extremity of ill, throw themselves upon the mercy of the waves, hoping to be cast upon some higher ground, as, even if they failed to reach it, a sudden would be better than a lingering death—in

dened and fettered that there is no spring of liberty in their steps."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

Men are running after wisdom; none find it but those who find Christ.

d *T. Brookes.*

a "One rough grapple is not enough. Wisdom glides away, if we give time to the arch deceiver."—*Miller.*

Pr. iii. 18.

v. 13. *D. R. Moss*, i. 409; *S. Perrott*, 231; *R. Greenham*, 609.

Remember, Christian soul, that thou hast this day, and every day of thy life, "God to glorify, Jesus to imitate, a soul to save, virtues to acquire, hell to avoid, heaven to gain, eternity to prepare for, time to profit by, neighbours to edify, the world to despise, devils to combat, passions to subdue, death, perhaps, to suffer, and judgment to undergo."

"'Tis not yet too late; seize Wisdom ere 'tis torment to be wise; that is, seize Wisdom ere she seizes thee."—*Young.*

"I called upon God, and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me. I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in com-

parison of her. Neither compared I unto her any precious stone, because all gold, in respect of her, is as a little sand; and silver shall be counted as clay to her. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light; for the light that cometh from her never goeth out."—*Wisdom of Solomon.*

c Burnett.

a Ps. i. 1.

"Venture not into the company of those that are infected with the plague, no, not though thou think thyself guarded with an antidote."—*Matt. Henry.*

b W. H. Newman.

v. 14. *D. W. Cooper*, i. 371; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, ii. 119; *J. Fawcett*, ii. 313; *J. Slade*, i. 356.

"'Hold thy peace!' says Wisdom to Folly. 'Hold thy peace!' replies Folly to Wisdom. 'Fly!' cries Light to Darkness: and Darkness echoes back 'Fly!' The latter chase has been going on since the beginning of the world, without an inch of ground gained on either side. May we believe that the result has been different in the contest between wisdom and folly."—*Hare.*

"For many years of our life we are forming ourselves upon what we observe in those about us. We learn not only

this dire extremity, one of these despairing creatures, to hold himself more firmly to the rock, grasped a weed, which, even wet as it was, he well knew, as the lightning's sudden flash afforded a momentary glare, was not a fucus, but a root of samphire; and he recollected that this plant never grows under water. This, then, became more than an olive branch of peace, a messenger of mercy. By it they knew that He who alone can calm the raging of the seas, at whose voice alone the winds and the waves are still, had placed His landmark, had planted His standard here; and by this sign they were assured that He had said to the wild waste of waters, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further." Trusting, then, to the promise of this angel of the earth, they remained stationary during the remainder of that dreadful, but then comparatively happy night; and in the morning they were seen from the cliffs above, and conveyed in safety to the shore.[c]

14, 15. (14) **enter not**, avoid the very entrances and beginnings of evil ways. **go not**, or walk not; a word that indicates the bold, arrogant walk of the presumptuous. **evil men**, as ch. i. 10—19.[a] (15) **avoid it**, as one well instructed in its way, and not enticed by attractive appearances. **turn from it**, so as to free thyself from its fascination.

Curiosity a temptation to sin (*vv.* 14, 15).—Curiosity strangely moves us to disobedience, in order that we may have experience of the pleasure of disobedience. If Satan can get us to sin once, he can easily make us sin twice or thrice, till at length we are taken captive at his will. The great thing in religion is to set off well—to flee temptation. 1. Because it is hardly possible to delay our flight without rendering flight impossible; 2. Familiarity with evil thoughts must be the consequence of allowing them to be present with us, even if we do not admit them into our heart; 3. Sinning once makes continuance in sin easy; 4. This leads to spiritual slavery.[b]

Avoid evil company.—In the year 1796, when the ship *Duff* was preparing to take out the missionaries from the London Missionary Society, Mr. Cox, one of the directors, was one day walking in the street, when he was met by a very fine-looking boy about fourteen years of age, who, stopping him, said, "Pray, sir, have you some management in the ship that is going out with the missionaries?" "Yes, I have, my young man," said Mr. Cox. "I should like very much, sir, to go out with her as a cabin-boy." "Would you?" said Mr. Cox; "have you any parents?" "I have a mother," said the boy, "but no father." "And is your mother willing that you should go?" "Oh yes, sir, very willing." Mr. Cox then desired the boy to call at his house, and to bring his mother along with him, that she might speak for herself. At the time appointed, the boy and his mother came, and she having declared her willingness that her son should go, the matter was accordingly settled. In the course of the conversation, a gentleman who was present, in order to try the boy, said to him, "So you wish to go to sea?" "Yes, sir, in the missionary ship." "And you can swear a good round oath, I suppose?" Shocked at the very idea of such a thing, the ingenuous little fellow burst into tears, and exclaimed, "If I thought there would be swearing aboard at all, I would not go."—*Temptation resisted.*—The following incident in the

early career of James Nisbet, the publisher, for many years a member of the Sunday-School Union Committee, is related by Dr. Hamilton, in his work on the parable of the "Prodigal Son:"—"On a wintry day in 1803 a lad left his native Kelso so sad at heart that, as he stood that night on the bridge at Berwick, the tear had almost frozen on his cheek. It was his eighteenth birthday when he found himself for the first time in our great labyrinth, and on one of the first evenings after his arrival a youth, who from the same vicinity had gone up to town the previous year, took him out to see the sights. The stroll ended in a sort of blind alley, and as his companion knocked at a door it was opened by some light-looking girls, evidently well acquainted with their visitor. With instant revulsion the new comer started back, for instinctively he felt that it was 'the house which inclineth unto death.' In much agitation he exclaimed, 'Oh, ——, where are you going?' and he entreated his companion to come away. That companion only laughed and went in, and as our friend sought his way back to his lodging he felt very desolate. It was a cold and dreary night, and in his disheartened mood he thought that London must be a devouring monster, which swallowed up whatever came into it, and changed it into the likeness of its own deformity. Here in a few months it had made a virtuous youth a profligate, and as if walking amidst snares and pitfalls and strange mysteries of iniquity, he trembled for himself. The whole thing was too painful for him till he went into the sanctuary. But next Sabbath he inquired his way to Swallow Street. There he found the worship which he had learned to love beyond the Border, and as he listened to the earnest sermon he began to feel, 'God is in this place.' The little church brightened into a Bethel, and helped to cheer the following week: and then came an introduction to the minister, and a class in the Sunday school, and the acquisition of one good friend after another, till at last the streets, which at his first arrival were haunted by gloomy phantoms and cruel ghosts, grew populous with brethren in the Lord; till he who had himself been so graciously preserved became distinguished for his efforts in preserving and strengthening younger brethren." "It was on the fiftieth anniversary of that eventful day that our venerable friend, his heart overflowing with gratitude to God, told us this incident. By that time he was an honoured citizen, and his name well known throughout the churches. Numbers of ministers and missionaries knew him. Many widows and orphans knew him. Nearly all our religious societies and benevolent institutions knew James Nisbet."

16, 17. (16) **sleep**, *etc.*, strong figs. to express the excited zeal of sinners in doing evil.[a] (17) **eat . . violence**, what they have got to support them has been obtained by dishonesty and violence.[b]

Living for sin (*vv.* 16, 17).—We have here a sad description of the desperately wicked—I. Finding his joy in life in ill-doing. II. In causing the ruin of others. III. Living on ill-gotten gains. Few of the ungodly reach to this height of wickedness suddenly: they began by consorting with the wicked, and hence their final character.

A strange reproof.—A Welshman was for some time awfully habituated to the vice of drunkenness, but was at length restored

their phrases, but their manners. The civility and courtesy which, in a well-ordered family, are constantly seen by its younger members, cannot fail to influence their deportment, and, whatever their natural vulgarity may be, will dispose them to check its appearance. Let the descendant of the meanest cottager be placed from his infancy where he perceives every one mindful of decorum, the marks of his extraction are soon obliterated; at least, his carriage does not discover it. And were the heir of a dukedom to be continually in the kitchen or stable, the young lord would soon be recognised only by his clothes and title: in other respects, he might be taken for the son of a groom or the scullion."—*Dean Bolton.*

a "The fearful stage of debasement, when the tendency to sin is like the craving for stimulants, as a condition without which there can be no repose." — *Spk. Com.*

b Comp. De. xvi. 3 Ps. cxxvii. 2; Am. ii. 8. Another inter-

pretation is suggested, "They eat wickedness as bread, and drink violence as wine." Comp. Job xv. 16, xxxiv. 7.
c Cheever.

to sobriety by the following singular incident. He had a tame goat, which would follow him to the alehouse he frequented. One day, by way of frolic, he gave the animal so much ale that it became intoxicated. What particularly struck the Welshman was that from that time, though the creature would follow him to the door, he never could get it to enter the house. He was thereby led to see how much his sin had sunk him beneath a beast, and from that period became a sober man.[c]

18. **just**, the man who ever seeks to do *right:* not the "justified" man of the New Test. **shining light**, of the morning. **shineth**, brightens, clears, or grows, on to the noontide fulness.[a] **more and more**, ever advancing and increasing.[b]

Progress of the righteous and the wicked (*vv.* 18, 19).—I. At the commencement of both there are difficulties to be overcome. II. These difficulties, by perseverance, are gradually diminished. III. Similar, also, in some respects, are the means by which they are both advanced; they are alike subject to the power of habit. IV. As they approach their end they afford clearer and more decisive indications of the eternal state to which they lead.[c]—*Advantages of a religious life* (*v.* 18).—I. It affords certainty and evidence. II. Beauty and excellence. III. Pleasantness; action; reflection; hope. IV. Instructive. V. Progressive. VI. In the end consummate perfection. Application—1. To those who are not just in the Gospel sense; 2. To those who are.[d]—*The course of a good life.*—A good life is like the course of the sun. Picture the sun shining through a bright summer day. I. How quiet. II. How regular and sure. III. How enlivening. IV. How progressive.[e]

The path of the just.—Many a man has sadly failed and clouded, if he has not totally darkened, the close of his life history; because he was not just, he lacked courage to defend the truth against obloquy. Erasmus, who might have been a star of the Reformation, was but a comet, because he was too timid to place himself beside Luther and other champions of Protestantism. Far different was the career of such a man as John Huss. In his boyhood we see the small but glowing spark, which could prompt him to trust his hand into the flames, when he had been reading a martyr's life, to see how far he himself could endure. We do not wonder that on his way to the stake, Huss could calmly smile as he witnessed the burning of his books; and when fastened thereto, sing a Bohemian hymn, until his voice was stifled by the smoke. A blind man may have a full belief in the brilliancy of a daylight he cannot behold, and the course of Christian life is at times similar. As Sir H. Vane wrote to his wife not long before his execution, "This dark night and black shade which God hath drawn over us may be, for aught we know, the ground colour of some beautiful piece that He is now exposing to the light."

19. **as darkness**, "a perpetual sunset."[a] Comp. Job iii. 6, x. 22, thick darkness; midnight gloom. **know . . stumble**,[b] as no light of religious knowledge points out to them their perils.

The way of the wicked (*v.* 19).—I. The traveller prefers darkness to light, because his deeds are evil. His way is morally

"The Orient light of dawn, wh. goes forth and shines to the stedfast day." —*Wordsworth.*

"'That grows and brightens even to the establishing of the day,' alluding to the supposed stationary position of the sun at noon." —*Otto Zöckler.*

b "The capacity of the soul for infinite development, its eternal craving for something better, the increase both of its desire and power for further advancement as it progresses, as well as the assurances of God's Word, demonstrate that we are made for progress."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Comp. fig. in 2 Sa. xxiii. 4.

c Dr. Noah Porter.

d H. Grove.

e Hive.

"The wise and active conquer difficulties by daring to attempt them."—*Rowe.*

a Schultens.

b 1 Sa. ii. 9; Job xviii. 5, 6, 18, xxiv. 13; Is. lix. 10; Jno. iii. 19, xi. 10, xii. 35, 36.

"All sin and

dark even at midday. Whatever his conceit, opinions, hopes, he is often doubtful and perplexed. II. The way full of ruggedness. Small objects make weary feet stumble. Things that the believer will easily surmount cause him to fall—as little temptations; little difficulties. III. There is safe walking through this world, only in the new and living way.

The improvident traveller.—A certain traveller, who had a distance to go, one part of his road leading through green fields, and the other through a tangled road of brambles and thorns, made great preparations for the first part of his journey. He dressed himself in light and gay clothes, and put a nosegay in his bosom, and taking a light, slender cane in his hand, nimbly proceeded on his way along the beaten path across the green meadows. The sun shone in the skies, and on went the traveller, comfortably, pleasantly, and delightfully. After a while, the road became rugged, and, by the time night drew on, the traveller was in a pitiable plight. His provisions were exhausted; his clothes wet through, and partly torn from his back by the briars; his flowers were faded, and, weary as he was, his slender cane would not bear his weight; a stream of water was before him, and darkness around him. "Alas!" said he, smiting his breast, "I am hungry, and have no food; wet to the skin, and have no dry clothes; weary, and have no staff to rest on; I have a stream to cross, and here is no boat; I am bewildered, and have no guide; it is dark, and I have no lantern. Fool that I am!—why did I not provide for the end of my journey, as well as the beginning?" Time is hastening away. We are all travellers. Life is the beginning, death the end of our journey.

20—22. (20) **my son**, some think that in the prev. *vv.* Sol. has been repeating the instructions he received fr. his father, and that in the 20th *v.* he begins again his own counsels to his son. **incline**, *etc.*, as *v.* 10. (21) **not depart**, or escape by being neglected.[a] **keep them**, by constant obediences, and constant watchings. (22) **health**, marg. *medicine*, or *healing*. This they become, as they preserve the young man from the vices destructive of health.

Divine principles (*vv.* 20—22).—I. The method of gaining them. There must be—1. The attentive ear; 2. The steadfast look; 3. The enshrining heart. II. The blessedness of having them. 1. They are life; 2. Health—health of all kinds.[b]

Running into temptation.—Jortin, in his remarks on Ecclesiastical History, relates the story of a colloquy between a father of the second century and an evil spirit in a Christian, whom he sought to expel. Upon inquiring how he dared be so impudent as to enter a Christian, the evil spirit replied, "I went not to church after him, but he came to the playhouse after me, and finding him upon my own ground, I sought to secure him for myself." Whatever becomes of the story, the moral of it deserves attention. The evil spirit rarely possesses any who are careful of their associations, and avoid all appearances of evil.[c]

23, 24. (23) **keep**, or keep watch, and guard. **heart**, regarded as the central citadel.[a] **all diligence**, above all keeping. "The heart, as the chief object of moral watchfulness, is plainly nothing but the conscience, the moral consciousness of man."[b] **issues of life**,[c] fig. from the fountains and wells of

wickedness in man's spirit hath the central force and energy of hell in it, and is perpetually pressing down towards it as towards its own place. Christ's burden, which is nothing else but true godliness, is a winged thing, and travels, bears itself upwards on its own wings, soaring aloft towards God; so the devilish nature is always within the central attractions of hell, and its own weight instigates and accelerates its motion thither." —*Old Author, quoted by Thomas.*

v. 19. *Dr. J. Langhorne*, i. 37.

a "'Let them not be withdrawn.'" —*Bertheau.*

Pr. iii. 8.

b Dr. Thomas.

See *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 359; *T. Dwight*, i. 298.

"Men of wit and parts need never be driven to indirect courses."—*Otway.*

Many think it great to have a strong, determined will. Few think it greater to have none.

c Dr. Leifchild.

a "Regard the heart as the very citadel and acropolis of thy being. The importance of keep-

the East, wh. were watched over with jealous care. (Song Sol. iv. 12.) (24) **froward mouth**, crookedness of mouth. **perverse**, or swerving, or quarrelling. **lips**, the agents in forming words.

The heart's diseases and dangers (*v.* 23).—The heart is the type of the affections, which are—1. The source of mental activity; 2. Of moral life. We need the exhortation because—I. Of the diseases to which the heart is liable. 1. Induration, or hardening; 2. Softening; 3. Atrophy, or wasting away; 4. Palpitation; 5. Enlargement. II. The dangers of the heart. 1. It may be enfeebled for lack of nourishment; 2. Stabbed; 3. Poisoned; 4. But the greatest danger is one that cannot affect the corporeal heart. You may be robbed of it. Pleasure, applause, worldly gain, pride, will all try to gain possession of it. You cannot keep it yourself, therefore give it unreservedly to God.[d]

Keeping the heart.—The heart is a *lamp*, which the High and Holy One has entrusted to our care: keep it well trimmed then, keep it with all diligence: let it not resemble those of the foolish virgins, who took no oil with them; but rather look unto God for fresh supplies of His grace, that you be not terrified at the midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."—The heart is a *ship;* keep it with all diligence. Look to the hull and the rudder, the masts, the sails, and the rigging. Have an eye to the crew, and take especial care what merchandise you put aboard; mind that you have plenty of ballast, and that you carry not too much sail. Mind that you have a heavenly Pilot at the helm. Be prepared for storms, for you will have them, whether you are prepared for them or not. Encourage the hope of a fair voyage and a happy arrival at a heavenly haven.—The heart is a *temple*. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Have a care that you keep it with all diligence: keep it pure and undefiled. Let the ark of the covenant be found within it. Let your prayers be set forth as incense, and the lifting up of your hands as the evening sacrifice. Let your offerings be without spot or blemish, remembering that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," and that "a broken and a contrite spirit He will not despise." Dedicate the temple of your hearts to the Lord of lords and King of kings, and use all diligence in seeking that it may be filled with His glory.—The heart is a *besieged city*, and liable to attacks on all sides. Go round about it; tell the towers thereof, and mark well the bulwarks. While you defend one part, keep a good look-out on the other; while you build up the bastion here, let not the gateway be left defenceless there. Shells may be thrown over the walls, and sappers may mine a way under them. Be alive! be diligent! post your sentinels! have a watchword! take care whom you let in, and whom you allow to go out. Muster your troops, and see that there be no traitors among them. You have plenty to do, and plenty to attend to; keep, then, your heart with all diligence.[e]

25—27. (25) **right on**, the fig. for pursuing a direct and straightforward course. The restless, wandering eye leads to evil, and shows that there is no fixedness of purpose. (26) **ponder**, or well consider. "Make smooth each foot-planting."[a] **established**, marg. ordered aright. (27) **turn not**, De. v 32. Avoid all by-paths.[b]

ing the heart is shown in the fact that the Heb. word (*leb*) heart occurs in the Bk. of Prov. ninety times."—*Wordsworth.*

"Guard thy heart as the great central 'guard-post,' and no out station will be cut off."—*Miller.*

b Otto Zöckler.

c "All vital principles are lodged there (in the heart), and only such as are good and holy will give you pleasure. The exercises of religion will be pleasant when they are natural and flow easily out of their own fountains."—*John Howe.*

d Stems and Twigs.

v. 23. *J. Mede*, i. 231; *T. Watson*, 529; *J. Flavel*, v. 417; *Dr. I. Barrow*, iii. 1; *Bp. Beveridge*, vi. 358; *Abp. Sharp*, i. 340; *J. Seed*, i. 231; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, ii. 263; *Dr. J. Trapp*, 175; *Dr. N. Lardner*, x. 589; *Dr. S. Chandler*, iii. 261.

"No action will be considered as blameless unless the will was so; for by the will the act was dictated."—*Seneca.*

e Old Humphrey.

a Miller.

b "A life of integrity requires attention to heart, eyes, speech, conduct."—*Fausset*

"He who reigns

Spiritual anatomy: the feet (*vv.* 26, 27).—I. The feet's natural course. 1. Found in the way of evil; 2. Which has diverse paths; 3. These paths fatal in their termination. II. Transition of the feet to the way of righteousness. 1. Consideration; 2. Arrestment; 3. Abandonment of evil way; 4. Prayer; 5. Decision. III. The feet consecrated to the Divine service. 1. They stand on a rock; 2. Enjoy liberty; 3. Established by the Lord; 4. Guided in the way to life eternal.[c]

Beginning well.—It is of vast moment to be "just right" when starting. At Preston, at Malines, at many such places, the railway lines go gently asunder; so fine is the angle that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little further on one of them turns a corner, or drives into a tunnel, and now that the speed is full the angle opens up, and at the rate of a mile a minute the divided convoy flies asunder. One passenger is on the way to Italy, another to the swamps of Holland; one will step out in London, the other in view of the Irish Channel.[d]

within himself, and rules passions, desires, and fears, is more than a king."—*Milton.*

c Dr. Burns.

vv. 24—27. *J. H. Newman*, iii. 208; *A. Roberts*, ii. 321; *Dr. R. Moss*, vi. 447; *Dr. W. F. Hook*, 263; *J. Saurin*, iv. 285; *T. Dwight*, v. 96; *Dr. H. Blair*, iii. 351; *J. J. Conybeare, Bamp. Lec.* ii. 395.

d Dr. J. Hamilton.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **my wisdom,**[a] learnt by actual, and poss. dear, experience. **bow,** or "incline." (2) **regard discretion,** or, maintain a wise, prudential consideration; a circumspect demeanour.[b] **lips,** *etc.*, lit. "and thy lips shall keep," etc. Thou shalt have the prompt, wise answer, at thy tongue's end, whenever temptation comes.

The strange woman and the wife (*vv.* 1—10).—I. Solomon's warning to young men against a wrong connection with women. The strange woman's—1. Conduct; 2. End; 3. Victims. II. Solomon's recommendation of a right connection with woman. Marriage.[c]

Evil companionship to be avoided.—It would not be complaisance, but cowardice—it would be a sinful softness, which allowed affinity in taste to imperil your faith or your virtue. It would be the same sort of courtesy which in the equatorial forest, for the sake of its beautiful leaf, lets the *liana* with its strangling arms run up the plaintain or orange, and pays the forfeit in blasted boughs and total ruin. It would be the same sort of courtesy which, for fear of appearing rude or inhospitable, took into dock the infected vessel, or welcomed, not as a patient but a guest, the plague-stricken stranger.[d]

a "The connection of wisdom and understanding is frequent; the first denotes the use of wise means for wise ends; the other the exercise of a proper discrimination in their discovery."—*Fausset.*

b Sol.'s lectures are not designed to fill our heads with notions, with matters of nice speculation, or doubtful disputation, but to guide us in the government of ourselves, that we may act prudently, so as becomes us, and so as will be for our true interest."—*Matt. Henry.*

c Dr. Thomas.

d Dr. J. Hamilton.

3, 4. (3) **strange woman,**[a] one outside of the true family bonds and relationships, ch. ii. 16. **drop . . honeycomb,** drops sweetness, or what seems to be sweetness; distil honey. **mouth,** or palate. **smoother than oil,** and therefore insinuating and persuasive. But her enticing promises are deceitful. (4) **her end,**[b] her future, in the sense of her reward. When the gloze is removed the real thing is bitter and ruinous. **wormwood,** De. xxix. 18. **two-edged sword,** *lit.* as a sword of mouths, with more than one mouth.[c]

The prostitute (*v.* 3).—I. We have here a description of her. 1. Her vile, unclean, flattering, enticing speech; 2. Her fate: her end bitter, physical suffering, mental anguish, spiritual distress. II. A word to her. 1. You are somebody's child; think of

a "The following description has been regarded by ancient expositors as having a double sense. 1. As a portrait of a harlot, especially one of foreign extraction; and 2. As being a representation of the allurements of

unsound doctrine and corrupt worship." — *Wordsworth.*

b Ps. xxxvii. 37, 38, lxxiii. 17.

c "The physical and moral suffering of the deluded profligate are notoriously terrible."—*Fausset.*

d G. Crabb.

the old time, etc.; 2. You are ruining body and soul; 3. Ruining others as well; 4. The woman that was a sinner found mercy; mercy for you.

The sensualist, the voluptuary, and the epicure.—The sensualist lives for the indulgence of his senses; the voluptuary, from *voluptas*, pleasure, is devoted to his pleasures, and as far as these pleasures are the pleasures of sense, the voluptuary is a sensualist; the epicure, from *epicurus*, is one who makes the pleasures of sense his god, and in this sense he is a sensualist and a voluptuary. In the application of these terms, however, the sensualist is one who is a slave to the grossest appetites; the voluptuary is one who studies his pleasures so as to make them the most valuable to himself; the epicure is a species of voluptuary who practises more than ordinary refinement in the choice of his pleasures.[d]

5, 6. (5) go down, and so lead her votaries down. hell,[a] *Sheol*, not here Gehenna. *Sheol* equals *Hades*, the lower word, the place of departed spirits; but here, significantly, the place of those dying unblessed. (6) ponder, ch. iv. 26. moveable, unsteady as an earthquake. "When disgusted with one course of sin, she glides into another."[b] thou . . them, many coms. prefer to read, "that she may not know them," so as to recognise their evil.

The tricks of harlotry (*v.* 6).—The harlot lives by diverting attention, lulling suspicion, glides about in the dark hours, knows her victims are ashamed of being seen in her company, assumes the dress and manner of virtuous women. Her ways are movable, she is restless, loves change, as also it is necessary to her calling: hence she flits to the casino, singing-saloon, theatre, gin-palace, etc.; seeks to drown the senses of her victim in mirth, and pleasure, and drink; and by deluding him with hopes of stolen pleasures, prevents him from pondering the path of life.

The true mission of woman.—

'Tis woman's to nourish affection's tree,
And its fruit, domestic bliss shall be:
'Tis hers to cultivate with patient toil,
Each heaven-born plant in the heart's deep soil;
And fruits and flowers her toil shall greet,
Richest flavours and odours on earth that meet.

'Tis woman's to fashion the infant mind,
To kindle its thoughts, and its hopes unbind;
To guide its young wing in the earliest flight,
And lure it to worlds of unsullied light;
To teach him to sing in his gladsome hours,
Of a Saviour's love, with an angel's powers!

'Tis woman's to bind up the broken heart,
And soften the blending spirit's smart;
With the balm that in Gilead's garden grows,
With the stream that from Calvary's fountain flows;
And to light in this world of sin and pain,
The lamp of love and of joy again.

7—9. (7) ye children, comp. *my son*, *v.* 1. This advice concerns all young men, not the one son only. It is invaluable advice for all. (8) remove, *etc.*, avoid the very approaches of her allurements. "Let thy way in life be far off from her."

a "Take hold on hell, as if to pull it swiftly and suddenly upon the sinner." — *Matt. Henry.*

"Strong figs. of misery are these; but not too strong. The horrid memories, the self-remorse, the ruined health and reputation, the blasted hopes,—what misery are these!"—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Miller.

The licentious never love; and when even levity preponderates, there is seldom any pure and ardent passion.

"'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud; 'tis virtue that doth make them most admired; 'tis modesty that makes them seem divine!"—*Shakespeare.*

a "Or, to the injured husband, who will punish the paramour of his faithless wife

not nigh, for sensual temptations may come when we are weak to resist. So better avoid the very scenes of temptation. (9) **honour**, in whatever it consists, character, health, or wealth. None can be kept by those who fall into the strange woman's hands. **cruel**,[a] such the temptress is sure to become in the end.

The safe way of escape (*v.* 8).—Abstain from the appearance of evil; do not expose yourself to unnecessary temptation; let none over-estimate his power of resistance; even those who would seek her salvation had better do so in company with others. All this because falling into her snare involves loss of honour, etc., and the worse than loss of the best years of life.

A prodigal.—A pious mother had a prodigal son. He was about to leave her and go to sea. As a last resource, she placed a Bible in his chest, with a prayer to God for His blessing upon it. Year after year passed away, and nothing was heard of the wanderer. But the eye of his mother's God was upon him. A long time after, a clergyman was called to visit a dying sailor. He found him penitent and prepared to die. He had in his possession a Bible, which, he said, was given to him by a dying shipmate, who, expiring in the hope of the glory of God, gave it to him with his parting blessing. On the blank leaf was found written the name of John Marshall, the pious mother's prodigal son. He was the brother of Mrs. Isabella Graham, whose interesting memoirs have profited many readers.[b]

10, 11. (10) **wealth**, marg. *strength*; but equivalent to property, possessions, the results of the putting forth of strength. Comp. the prodigal, who "wasted his substance with riotous living." The goods and business of the sensual man are soon "sold up," his earthly prospects are ruined through his bad companions and self-indulgent ways. (11) **mourn**, *etc.*, as Sol. did. Eccle. vii. 26. **flesh**, *etc.*, sensual vices being productive of miserable and shameful diseases.

The doom of the libertine (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. Waste of wealth. It is spent to garnish the house of sin; is so much taken from home-scenes, and legitimate pleasures, and benevolence. II. Waste of health. Regard for these words of God would make the C. D. Acts needless, as they are a premium to vice. Note the corruption of licentious nations, as the Turks, etc. III. Waste of tears. Mourning at the last is too late for proving the repentance to be genuine.

The woe of women.—

So soon men's passion passes! yea, it sinks
Like foam into the troubled wave which bore it.
Merciful God! let me entreat Thy mercy!
I have seen all the woes of men—pain, death,
Remorse, and worldly ruin: they are little,
Weighed with the woe of woman when forsaken
By him she loved and trusted. Hear, too, thou!
Lady of Heaven, Mother of God and man,
Who made the world His brother, one with God—
Maid-mother! mould of God, who wrought in thee
By model as He doth in the world's womb,
So that the universe is great with God;
Thou in whom God did deify Himself,
Betaking Him into mortality,
As in Thy Son He took it into Him,

with merciless severity, perchance sell him as a slave, or even take his life."—*Otto Zöckler.*

Ro. vi. 23.

A British nobleman, seeing his nephew leaving a house of ill-fame, said to him, "Do not be ashamed to come out of that place; rather, in future, be ashamed to go in."

"Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible."—*Shakespeare.*

[b] *Cheever.*

vv. 11, 12. *W. Jay*, iii. 298.

vv. 12—13. *Bp. Wilson*, i. 135.

When Leti, the historian, was one day attending the levee of Charles II., he said to him, "Leti, I hear that you are writing the *History of the Court of England.*" "Sir, I have been for some time preparing materials for such a history." "Take care that your work give no offence," said the prince. Leti replied, "Sir, I will do what I can, but if a man were as wise as Solomon, he would scarcely be able to avoid giving offence." "Why, then," rejoined the king, "be as wise as Solomon; write proverbs, not histories."

And from the temporal and eternal made
Of the soul-world one same and ever God!
Oh, for the sake of thine own womanhood,
Pray away aught of evil from her soul;
And take her out of anguish unto Thee,
Always, as Thou didst this one.[a]

12—14. (12) and say, in the language of bitter and hopeless remorse. how, *i.e.* in what an inexcusable way. not obeyed, warnings that after awhile are seen to have been full of wisdom and full of love. (14) all evil, the remorseful confession of near approach to exposure and destruction. "How narrowly I escaped condemnation before the assembled congregation, and execution by stoning."[a]

The sinner's retrospect (*vv.* 12, 13).—I. The sinner's retrospect. Two classes of men. 1. Those who feel some painful consequences of their past conduct; 2. Those who are sensible that they have not answered the great ends of life. II. The sinner's alternative. We must either attend to the voice of instruction in the Gospel, or carry remorse into eternity. Advice:—1. Endeavour to view everything in the light of eternity; 2. Spend each day as you will wish you had spent it in the future.[b]

Purity of heart.—God is for that man, and that man is for God, who carries about with him a pure heart. Heart purity makes a man the darling of heaven. Many affect pure language, pure houses, pure habits, pure hands, pure air, pure meat, pure drink, pure gestures, etc., who yet, for want of purity of heart, shall never see the face of God in glory. Heart purity speaks a man eternally happy. Holiness is that noble principle which fits a man for the happiest sight of God: it makes a man a meet companion for God, both here and hereafter. Without this principle no man can have communion with God in this world; much less can he have communion with God in heaven, if this precious principle of holiness be not seated in his heart. It will not stand with the holiness of God, to have anything to do with those that have no principles of holiness in them. It is a principle of holiness that fits a man for the service of God, that fits a man for fellowship with God, that fits a man for walking with God, that fits a man for correspondence with God, that fits a man for the delight of God, and that fits a man for an everlasting fruition of God. And therefore certainly without holiness there is no happiness; without a principle of purity there can be no seeing of the face of God in glory.[c]

15—17. (15) own cistern, seek thy satisfaction within the circles of pure family relationships.[a] running waters, which flow freshly into the cistern.[b] "Only the natural fountain-head can pour forth purling waters, living, fresh, cool for drinking. (16) thy fountains,[c] fig. for thy children. Or more prob. the verse should be made interrogative, and read thus, "Shall thy streams flow abroad as water-brooks in the streets?" (17) only thine own, or, for thyself alone.

Family joys (*v.* 15).—I. A painter lays down a dark ground to lean his picture on, and thereby bring its beauty out. II. The Lord condescends to bring His own institution forward in rivalry with the deceitful pleasures of sin. III. Although the stream is

a Bailey.

a "The public scandal of the sin is brought in as its last aggravating feature." —*Spk. Com.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"The sun, powerful as it is, cannot discover what is at the bottom of a muddy pool, so God cannot be revealed to a sinful, muddy, depraved heart."—*Rev. Thomas Jones.*

"It is better and safer to ride alone than to have a thief's company; and such is a wicked man, who will rob thee of precious time, if he do thee no more mischief. The Nazarites, who might drink no wine, were also forbidden to cut grapes whereof wine is made; so we must not only avoid sin in itself, but also the causes and occasions thereof, amongst which is bad company."—*Spencer.*

c Brook.

a "The wife is appropriately compared with a fountain.... In antiquity, and esp. in the East, the possession of a spring was regarded as a great and even sacred thing. Thus the mother of Sarah is compared to a well-spring." Is. li. 1."—*Umbreit.*

very pure, a small bulk of foreign matter will sensibly tinge it. IV. Not only abstain from evil, but do the good demanded.[a]

The Christian like a cistern.—A Christian is not unfitly represented by a water cistern, such as may be found in every house in the city of Glasgow. For its supply each cistern is dependent upon a highland lake many miles away. When the cistern is full, a valve shuts off the inflowing current, and it ceases entirely. If the water in the cistern is frozen, nothing can be given out, and neither can more flow in. The water, however, may be perfectly free to flow, but from some obstruction none may be dispensed. If this continues long, the water in the cistern will become corrupt and unwholesome. Let, however, the water flow by the right channel, and become a refresher and purifier in the household, and then the more the cistern gives out, the more it will be able to take in. So is it with the Christian, since the heart, once an empty cistern, has been brought, by faith, into communication with the Heavenly Fountain.

18, 19. (18) **be blessed**, in family prosperities attending conjugal fidelity.[a] **rejoice**, in her society. (19) **hind . . roe**,[b] the most tender, gentle, and beautiful creatures of the East. **ravished**, *lit.* intoxicated, *i.e.* fully satisfied.

Marriage (*v.* 18).—I. This points to early marriage. This best for health, peace, happiness, and home. II. It points also to equality of age and rank. In the natural course of things those are most likely to see their children advance to adult age before they pass away. Late marriages often result in young widows and helpless orphans.

Meaning of wife.—And now let us see whether the word wife has not a lesson. It literally means a weaver. The wife is the person who weaves. Before our great cotton and cloth factories arose, one of the principal employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing: every family made its own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called spinsters; the thread was woven into cloth by their mother, who, accordingly, was called the weaver, or the wife; and another remnant of this old truth we discover in the word heirloom, applied to any old piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or bed, shows that a loom was once a most important article in every house. Thus the word wife means weaver; and as Trench well remarks, "in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest, in-door, stay-at-home occupations, as being fitted for her who bears this name."

20, 21. (20) **strange woman**, foreign harlot, who will entice both to sensuality and idolatry. (21) **before . . Lord**,[a] taking the highest ground of persuasion. Not merely for prudential reasons, but in the "fear of the Lord," we should live chastely, soberly, and godly. Sensual sins may be indulged in secret, but the Lord observes and weighs all our actions.

Keeping the heart.—We are not to destroy our appetites and passions, but to keep them in subordination: keeping the heart is not murdering it. It is an old saying that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." It seems as though there were no word so far-reaching as the word "watch." Vigilance is the price of everything good and great in earth or heaven. It was for his

b "Do not steal water from others, as the strange woman entices thee to do."—*Wordsworth.*

c "Wedded love streams forth in blessing on all around, on children, and on neighbours, and in the streets, precisely because the wife's true love is given to the husband only."—*Spk. Com.*

d Dr. Arnot.

a "Tender, well-regulated domestic affection is the best defence against the vagrant desires of unlawful passions."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities and churches, and heaven itself."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

b "In the whole circle of Arab. and Persian poetry, the antelope and the gazelle are the chosen images of beauty—lithe of limb, graceful in motion, dark and lustrous of eye, fleet and strong, they served with equal fitness for the masculine and feminine types of it."—*Spk. Com.*

a Job xxxi. 4, xxxiv. 21; Pr. xv. 3; Jer. xvi. 17, xxxii. 19.

v. 21. *Dr. W. Delaune*, 149; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 201; *G. Carr*, i. 342; *J. P. Morgan*, i. 131.

A father said to his son, who was

at a Sabbath school, and had attended to what he heard there, "Carry this parcel to such a place." "It is Sabbath," replied the other. "Put it in your pocket," replied the father. "God can see in my pocket," answered the child.

"He who hath many friends, hath none." — *Aristotle.*

faithful vigilance that the memory of the Pompeiian sentinel is embalmed in poetry and recorded in history. Nothing but unceasing watchfulness can keep the heart in harmony with God's heart. It was a stormy, boisterous night. The dark clouds hung over us, and the wind came with tenfold fury. The sea rolled in mountains, and the proud ship seemed but a toy amid those tremendous billows. Far up on the mast, on the look out, the sailor was heard to cry, "An iceberg on the starboard-bow!" "An iceberg on the larboard-bow!" The deck-officer called to the helmsman, "Port the helm steadily!" and the sailors at the wheel heard and obeyed. The officers were roused, for there was danger on board to three hundred precious souls. The captain spent a sleepless night, pacing the deck or cabin. Gigantic icebergs were coming against the vessel, and eternal vigilance was the price of our safety in that northern sea. And so it is all through human life. How grand is he who keeps his heart! Fortunes may depart, loved ones pass away, but blessed the man or woman who keeps the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

22, 23. (22) **iniquities,** *etc.*, illus. in Saul, Ahithophel, Haman, etc.[a] **cords of his sins,** the sins constantly indulged become at last enslaving cords, as is seen in the case of the drunkard.[b] (23) **without instruction,**[c] *i.e.* without having gained it. Or better, "for lack of correction." The understanding being that the wicked man has had instruction offered, but has refused to receive it. **his folly,** as if he were drunk. The same word is used as is trans. *ravished* in *v.* 19. We may trans. "made insane."

Sinful habits (*v.* 22).—I. Their formation. 1. One sin leads to another by reducing sense of odiousness; 2. By strengthening wrong principle; 3. By rendering necessary for purposes of concealment; 4. By multiplying opportunities for commission; 5. By lessening the power of resistance. II. Their power. 1. As seen in the criminal; 2. In the drunkard; 3. Swindler; 4. Errorist; 5. Gospel-despiser. Apply:—(1) Beware what habits we form; (2) Mark the increased difficulty of conversion; (3) Watch over the religious education of the young.[d]

Victory over self.—A man that is born a conqueror over his own corruptions and over himself, he is greater than ever was the greatest conqueror; and it is better to be made in this kind a victor over his own passions than to be universal emperor over all the world. Saith Seneca, there are many men that have subdued principalities, kingdoms, cities, towns, and countries, and brought them under their own mastery; but there are few that have guided themselves, but still there is a tiger within them that disgraceth and obscureth their outward conquest by reason of foul seethings and corruptions in their own flesh: therefore, for a man to get the victory, and to overcome himself, is to get the victory, and to overcome all the world; for man is a microcosm, a little world, as St. Austin saith.[e]

a "Habit hath so vast a prevalence over the human mind that there is scarce anything too strange or too strong to be asserted of it. The story of the miser, who from long accustoming to cheat others, came at last to cheat himself, and with great delight and triumph picked his own pocket of a guinea to convey to his hoard, is not impossible or improbable.—*Fielding.*
Pr. i. 31; Jer. ii. 19.
b Secrecy is the study and hope of the wicked. A sinner's chief labour is to hide his sin; and his labour is all lost. Sin becomes the instrument of punishing sinners—retribution in the system of nature, set in motion by the act of sin."—*Arnot.*
c Job iv. 21, xxxvi. 12.
d G. Brooks.
e Day.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) **surety,**[a] if thou hast given thy name as security. Jewish law was very severe on sureties. **stricken thy hand,**

a The word used in E. V. primarily means to *inter-*

the form or sign by which a pledge was taken.[b] **stranger**, prob. the alien money-lender, either Phœnician or Egyptian, who will be sure to demand the literal execution of his bond. (2) **snared**, *etc.*, prob. in some fixed form of words, and not by writing, the contract was made.

weave. A man *interwoven* with a stranger is one implicated in the same account.

Ge. xliii. 9.

Social suretyships (*vv.* 1—5).—Solomon here speaks of suretyships as an evil. I. To be deplored. There are always two things necessary to make it justifiable. 1. The case should be deserving; 2. You should be fully competent to discharge the obligation. II. As an evil very easily contracted. III. To be strenuously removed. Deliver thyself—1. Promptly; 2. Beseechingly; 3. Effectively.[c]

Suretyship.—Beware of suretyship for thy best friends. He that payeth another man's debts seeketh his own decay. But if thou canst not otherwise choose, rather lend thy money thyself upon good bonds, although thou borrow it: so shalt thou secure thyself and pleasure thy friend. Neither borrow money of a neighbour or a friend, but of a stranger, where paying for it, thou shalt hear no more of it; otherwise thou shalt eclipse thy credit, lose thy freedom, and yet pay as dear as to another. But in borrowing of money be precious of thy word, for he that hath care of keeping days of payment is lord of another man's purse.[d]

b Job xvii. 3; Pr. xvii. 18, xxii. 26; Eze. xvii. 18.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Aristotle defineth friendship to be a love of another, not for any good we get, but merely for the party's sake who is beloved."—*Anthony Burgess.*

d Ld. Burleigh.

3—5. (3) **now**, *i.e.* at once, and earnestly. **when**, better, since thou art come into the snare. **humble thyself**, bow thyself down, stamp with thy foot,[a] hasten. **make sure**, or press hotly upon. The idea is that by persuasion, or, if need be, by threats, the bond should be got back.[b] (4) **give**, *etc.*, make it a matter of absorbing interest. (5) **roe**, ch. v. 19. The gazelle.

Condition of a suitor.—

So pitiful a thing is suitor's state—
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to court to me; for had I wist,
That few have found, and many a one hath miss'd!
Full little knowest thou—thou hast not tried—
What hell it is in suing long to bide;
To lose good days, that might be better spent,
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy prince's grace, yet want his peers';
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares,
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.[c]

a Be importunate.

b "Solomon here advises the man who has made himself surety for a friend, to urge that friend importunately to pay his debt to the creditor, and so to deliver him who was surety for him."—*Bede.*

"He that has no friend and no enemy, is one of the vulgar, and without talents, power, or energy."—*Lavater.*

c Sir W. Raleigh.

6—8. (6) **ant**, a creature whose restless, unwearied activity is very remarkable. A proverbial emblem of industry.[a] (7) **no guide**, *etc.*, there were all the signs and results of organisation, yet no leadership; all depended on the diligence, skill, and activity of each individual.[b] (8) **provideth**, *etc.*, this has been questioned, but it is certainly true of some kinds of ants.

A secular sermon on foresight (*vv.* 6—11).—Creation full of teachers. Here we gather round an insect. Lesson taught by

a Improvident sluggards usually want suretics. Hence such are advised to industry by the ant's example.

b "When I began to employ workmen in this com-

try (Syria) nothing annoyed me more than the necessity to hire also an *overseer*, or to fulfil this office myself. But I soon found that this was universal, and strictly necessary. The workmen, every way unlike the ant, will not work at all unless kept to it, and directed in it by an overseer, who is himself a perfect specimen of laziness."—*Thomson, Land and Book.*

c Dr. J. Parker.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* remarks that the Arabians hold the wisdom of the ant in such veneration that they used to place one of these insects in the hand of a newly-born infant, repeating these words, "May the boy turn out clever and skilful."

vv. 6—8. *W. Berriman*, i. 253; *T. Manton*, v. 1029; *Dean Delany*, 349; *Dr. W. Dodd*, iii. 168; *R. Walker*, iii. 127; *J. Calthrop*, i. 228.

"So numerous were the ants, and so great was the mischief wh. they committed, that the Portuguese called this insect the 'King of Brazil;' but it is said by Piso, that an active husbandman easily drove them away, either by means of fire or of water; and the evil which they did was more than counterbalanced by the incessant war wh. they waged against all other

the ant is foresight. Foresight a faculty almost Divine. A wise foresight makes life pleasant—I. By economising time. II. By systematising duties. III. By diminishing difficulties. Apply.—Every life has a summer, so also a winter: prepare.[c]—*The sluggard reproved* (*vv.* 6—10).—Address the sluggard—I. In a way of humiliating reproof. Consider the ant. 1. Her wise foresight; 2. Her voluntary labour; 3. Her prudent care. II. In a way of solemn warning. 1. Reflect on the awfulness of thy state; 2. Reflect also on the vanity of thy excuses. Address—(1) Those who have never yet been awakened; (2) Those who being awakened are disposed to slothful habits.[d]

Ants storing up food.—Most modern entomologists have denied that ants store up corn, and have suggested that the resemblance of the *pupa*, or chrysalis of that insect, to a grain of wheat was the foundation of the supposed error. It has been further remarked that Solomon's language might merely mean that the ant gathered food when food was plentiful—in fact, "made hay while the sun shone." But Colonel Sykes discovered at Poona, in India, a species of ant which stores up the seeds of a kind of millet; and a correspondent of the *Athenæum* states, in a recent number of that journal, that a pile of wheat having been left on a threshing-floor in the island of Zante, it was subsequently found to have been plundered by ants. On one of the nests of these little pilferers being opened, "two good-sized tin cansful of grain" were discovered in it. The observations of Israel's royal naturalist are thus substantially confirmed.—The following extracts from Livingstone's *Travels in South Africa* afford interesting illustrations of the habits of this insect:—"The country between Linyanti and Sesheke is perfectly flat, except patches elevated only a few feet above the surrounding level. There are also many mounds where the gigantic anthills of the country have been situated, or still appear; these mounds are evidently the work of the termites. No one who has not seen their gigantic structures can fancy the industry of these little labourers; they seem to impart fertility to the soil which has once passed through their mouths, for the Makololo find the sides of anthills the choice spots for rearing early maize, tobacco, or anything on which they wish to bestow especial care." On the banks of the Chobe he tells us he found some of the anthills thirty feet in height, and of a base so broad that trees grow on them. "The white ant keeps generally out of sight, and works under galleries constructed by night to screen them from the observation of birds. At some given signal, however, I never could ascertain what, they rush out by hundreds, and the sound of their mandibles cutting grass into lengths may be heard like a gentle wind murmuring through the leaves of the trees. They drag these pieces to the doors of their abodes, and after some hours' toil leave off work, and many of the bits of grass may be seen collected around the orifice. They continue out of sight for perhaps a month, but they are never idle. On one occasion a good bundle of grass was laid down for my bed on a spot which was quite smooth and destitute of plants. The ants at once sounded a call to a good supply of grass. I heard them incessantly nibbling and carrying away all that night, and they continued all next day (Sunday), and all that night, too, with unabated energy. They had thus been thirty-six hours at it, and seemed

as fresh as ever. . . . At some of their operations they beat time in a curious manner. Hundreds of them are engaged in building a large tube, and they wish to beat it smooth. At a signal they all give three or four energetic beats on the plaster in unison. It produces a sound like the dropping of rain off a bush when touched. These insects are the chief agents employed in forming a fertile soil. But for their labours the tropical forests, bad as they are now with fallen trees, would be a thousand times worse. They would be impassable on account of the heaps of dead vegetation lying on the surface, and emitting worse effects than the comparatively small unburied collections do now. Ants surely are wiser than some men, for they learn by experience. They have established themselves, even on these plains, where water stands so long annually as to allow the lotus and other aqueous plants to come to maturity. When all the ant-horizon is submerged a foot deep, they manage to exist by ascending to little houses, built of black tenacious loam on stalks of grass, and placed higher than the line of inundation. This must have been the result of experience, for if they had waited till the water actually invaded their terrestrial habitations, they would not have been able to procure materials for their aërial quarters, unless they dived down to the bottom for every mouthful of clay. Some of these upper chambers are about the size of a bean, and others as large as a man's thumb."

vermin. In some parts of South America they march periodically in armies, such myriads together, that the sound of their coming over the fallen leaves may be heard at some distance. The inhabitants, knowing the season, are on the watch, and quit their houses, which these tremendous but welcome visitors clear of centipedes, forty-legs, scorpions, snakes, every living thing; and having done their work, proceed upon their way."—*Southey.*

9. how long, *etc.*, comp. ch. xxiv. 30—34.

A state of sin a state of sleep (*v.* 9).—I. The state—1. A state of forgetfulness; 2. Of insensibility; 3. Of inactivity; 4. Of danger. II. The change. It is awaking—1. To a due sense of our position as fallen beings; 2. To the duty of seeking a right relation to God in the only way in which it can be found; 3. To an habitual realisation of the powers of the world to come. III. The appeal. 1. You have slept too long already; 2. The longer you sleep, the more difficult to awake; 3. All awake but you—heaven; hell; 4. You have a great work to accomplish: your sleep may be prolonged and deepened into the sleep that knows no waking.[a]

Idleness not enjoyment.—So far from complete inaction being perfect enjoyment, there are few sufferings greater than that which the total absence of occupation generally induces. Count Caylus, the celebrated French antiquary, spent much time in engraving the plates which illustrate his valuable works. When his friends asked him why he worked so hard at such an almost mechanical occupation, he replied, "*Je grave pour ne pas me pendre*,"—"I engrave lest I should hang myself." When Napoleon was slowly withering away, from disease and *ennui* together, on the rock of St. Helena, it was told him that one of his old friends, an ex-colonel in his Italian army, was dead. "What disease killed him?" asked Napoleon. "That of having nothing to do," it was answered. "Enough," sighed Napoleon, "even had he been an emperor." Nature has beneficially provided that if the greater proportion of her sons must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, that bread is far sweeter from the previous effort than if it fell spontaneously into the hand of listless indolence. It is scarcely to be questioned, then, that labour is desirable for its own sake, as well as for the substantial results which it affords; and, consequently, that it by no means lessens,

[a] *G. Brooks.*

"Idleness is the very rust and canker of the soul: the devil's cushion, pillow, chief reposal; his very tide-time of temptation, as it were, wherein he carries with much care, and without contradiction, the current of our corrupt affections to any cursed sin."—*Bolton.*

"Idleness is the bane of body and of mind; the nurse of naughtiness; the stepmother of discipline; one of the seven deadly sins; the cushion upon which the devil chiefly reposes; a great cause not only of melancholy, but of many other diseases; for the mind is naturally active; and if it be not occupied about some honest business,

it rushes into mischief, or sinks into melancholy."—*Burton.*

b Dr. Potter.

"The idle man is the devil's cushion, on wh. he taketh his free ease: who, as he is incapable of any good, so is he fitly disposed for all evil motions. The standing water soon stinketh; whereas the current ever keeps clear and cleanly; conveying down all noisome matter, that might infect it, by the force of its stream. If I do but little good to others by my endeavours, yet this is great good to me,—that by my labour I keep myself from hurt."—*Bp. Hall.*

c H. W. Beecher.

a "An ironical imitation of the language of the lazy man."—*Otto Zöckler.*

b "The Heb., richer than the English, employs 3 synonymes for sleep. A little sleep, slumber, folding of the hands, as for a *siesta*."—*Spk. Com.*

"It is false and indolent humility wh. makes people sit still and do nothing, because they will not believe they are capable of doing much, for everybody can do something. Everybody can set a good example, be it to many or to few; everybody can in some degree encourage virtue

but rather adds to, the general chance of happiness, that nearly all the members of society should, in some shape or other, be placed under an obligation to labour for their support.[b]—*Fortunes to be made by work.*—Few conceive, or are taught to conceive, that by a law of God as fundamental as the law of gravitation, and as universal as human society, success in life is the equivalent of industry, knowledge, prudence, and perseverance, and not the result of chance. The exceptions are few and rare and occasional, in which it would be found to come from anything in the nature of real luck. It is the effect of definite causes; and happiness would make great strides if there could be a conviction settled in the hearts of the young throughout the land that to make one's fortune means to give a fair equivalent of thought or skill or labour for that fortune. For men go out to hunt their fortune, to fire it upon the wing, to take it as it runs through the forest. They mean to find it already made. They do not understand that they must make it themselves if they are to have it. Ten thousand young hearts are to-day looking at New York as the goal of their ambition, without asking whether they have health to bear its strains; without pausing to consider whether they have virtue to withstand its temptations; without troubling themselves to ascertain whether they have the nerve to maintain themselves in the midst of its competition: without giving a moment's thought to the question as to whether they have a natural fitness for its duties. They see only the great and glowing picture of their fancy, and by night and by day they think that all would be well if they could but rid themselves of their country clogs, and enter the Elysian fields of city life. This vision attracts multitudes, as by-and-by it will mock them.[c]

10, 11. (10) **a little sleep**, graphic description of the feeling and wishes of the sluggard.[a] **folding . . sleep**, the well-known attidude of one who is settling himself down to sleep.[b] (11) **travelleth**, lit. *one who looks backwards and forwards*, i.e. a highwayman. **armed man**, lit. *a man of a shield.*[c] "The habit of indolence is more fatally destructive than these marauders."

Characteristics of idleness.—It was a great vanity in Dionysius that he would needs be the best poet; and in Caligula, that he would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, that he would needs be the best fiddler. And so they became the three worst princes—minding other men's business more than their own callings. So it is very great vanity in many professors to mind more other men's business than their own: from the society of such saints we must withdraw. No man is too noble to have a calling. If iron had reason, it would choose rather to be used in labour, than to grow rusty in a corner. By the law of Mahomet, the Grand Turk himself was to be of some trade. The hour of idleness is the hour of temptation. An idle person is the devil's tennis ball, tossed by him at his pleasure. God ordained that the neck of the consecrated ass should be broken (Ex. xiii. 13), instead of sacrificing it: peradventure, because that animal hath ever been the hieroglyphic of sloth and laziness. Among the Egyptians idleness was a capital crime. Among the Locrians, he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians, idle persons were delivered to the carnifex. By the laws of Solon, idle persons were to suffer death. The ancients call

idleness the burial of a living man; and Seneca had rather be sick than idle. Now, shall nature do more than grace? Shall poor blind heathens be so severe against idle persons, and shall Christians embrace them? Should they not rather turn their backs upon them and have no intercourse with them who think themselves too great, or too good, to hold the plough?[d]

The two workers.—

Two workers in one field
Toiled on from day to day;
Both had the same hard labour,
Both had the same small pay,
With the same blue sky above,
The same green grass below:
One soul was full of love,
The other full of woe.

One leaped up with the light,
With the soaring of the lark;
One felt it ever night,
For his soul was ever dark.
One heart was hard as stone,
One heart was ever gay;
One worked with many a groan,
One whistled all the day.

One had a flower-clad cot
Beside a merry mill;
Wife and children near the spot
Made it sweeter, fairer still.
One a wretched hovel had,
Full of discord, dirt, and din;
No wonder he seemed mad,
Wife and children starved within.

Still they worked in the same field,
Toiled on from day to day;
Both had the same hard labour,
Both had the same small pay.
But they worked not with one will;
The reason let me tell:
Lo! the one drank at the still,
And the other at the well.

12—15. (12) **naughty person**, lit. *man of Belial*. De. xiii. 13. **walketh**, *etc.*, "he walks" (lit.) *in crookedness of mouth*: the speech of such a one is tortuous and crafty.[a] (13) **winketh**,[b] using mute signs to convey his meanings, and so deceiving those who do not know the signs. **speaketh . . feet**, making significant gestures. "All the means by wh. man holds intercourse with man are turned to instruments of fraud and falsehood."[c] (14) **frowardness**, Pr. ii. 14. **deviseth mischief**, cunning being the talent of the weak and lazy. (15) **calamity**, lit. *crushing weight*. **broken**, shivered to pieces. **without remedy**,[d] *see* ch. v. 22.

A bad man (*v.* 12).—We have here—I. The portrait of a bad man. He is—1. Perverse in speech; 2. Artful in conduct; 3. Mischievous in purpose. II. The doom of a bad man. It is—1. Certain; 2. Sudden; 3. Irremediable.[e]

and religion, and discountenance vice and folly; everybody has some one whom they can advise and instruct, or in some way help to guide through life."—*Miss Talbot.*

c "One that has waited for a fight knows how slowly the armed men seem to come up. They may be hours passing the intervening space. There is no sound of them. They are not on the roads, or on the air, neither in sight or echo, and yet they are *coming on!* The intervening time is the sluggard's sleeping time, and it seems an age."—*Miller.*

v. 11. *T. Boston*, vi. 449.

d T. Brooks. "Rather do what is nothing to the purpose, than be idle; that the devil may find thee doing. The bird that sits is easily shot, when fliers 'scape the fowler. Idleness is the dead sea that swallows all the virtues, and the self-made sepulchre of a living man."—*Quarles.*

a "Idleness and vice are allied. Though indolent in acts, he actively and habitually is ill-natured in speech."—*Fausset.*

One author calls idleness "The most corrupting fly that can blow on the human mind."

Speaking with the feet and fingers.—It should be remembered that when people are in their houses they do not wear sandals, consequently their feet and toes are exposed. When guests wish to speak with each other so as not to be observed by the host, they convey their meaning by the feet and toes. Does a person wish to leave a room in company with another, he lifts up one of his feet, and then suddenly puts it down on the ground.—*He teacheth with his fingers.*—When merchants wish to make a bargain in the presence of others without making known their terms, they sit on the ground, have a piece of cloth thrown over the lap, and then put each a hand under, and thus speak with the fingers. When the Brahmins convey religious mysteries to their disciples, they teach with their fingers, having the hands concealed in the folds of their robes.[f]

16, 17. (16) these . . hate, a common Heb. form of climax.[a] yea, seven, this number usually represents *completeness*, either for good or evil. abomination, De. vii. 25. These evil things are all found in the "man of Belial," *v.* 12. Specially regarded as a man who sows discord. (17) proud look, lit. *eyes of loftiness.*[b] The spirit that leads men to *overvalue* themselves, and *undervalue* all about them. lying tongue, a sure sign of the corrupt heart. hands . . blood, heartlessly cruel, both towards God's innocent creatures and towards the man's brethren. Is. lix. 7.

Seven abominable things (*vv.* 16—19).—Here is a catalogue of evils specially odious to God. I. Haughty bearing, implies—1. Self-ignorance: 2. Unkindness; 3. Irreverence. II. Verbal falsehood. 1. Which implies a wrong heart; 2. Has a bad social tendency. III. Heartless cruelty, implies—1. Lack of sympathy with God's creatures; 2. With God's mind. IV. Vicious scheming. V. Mischievous eagerness. VI. Social slander. VII. Disturbing strife. Subject shows—1. The moral hideousness of the world; 2. The immaculate purity of God; 3. The true mission of the godly.[c]

The heart.—If we ask why the heart is chosen rather than any other organ—or, rather, than the understanding, or judgment, or memory—we find our answer in the fact that the understanding may be always subject to circumstances, or may be enfeebled by disease; the judgment may be in error, and the memory may fail. In the Scriptures, the word heart is by metonymy used as implying the understanding. It is represented as being the seat of the will and the conscience. There are three reasons why the heart is chosen. 1. A pathological: it is the fountain of life, through which the blood passes, to be distributed to every part of the system. Stop the heart, and death follows. 2. The heart is the region of sensibility. When the great passions of hope and fear, of love and hate, of joy and sorrow, take hold of a man, he realises the sensation in the region of the heart. 3. The intellect is controlled by the heart, more than the heart by the intellect. Men do not follow their thinkings, but their feelings; yet there are teachers proclaiming a religion of pure intellect, excluding the passions or feelings of the soul. Christianity appeals to the emotions. Some of the colder members of the Church—for there are icebergs in the Church as much as in Greenland—are insensible to these emotions, and when a man sings for joy, he is put down as a fit

b Pr. x. 10; Ps. xxxv. 19.

c "He suggests wickedness to others by ungodly signals, winks, innuendoes, and gesticulations."—*Wordsworth.*

d Da. xi. 45.

e Dr. Thomas.

f Roberts

a Comp. Job v. 19; Pr. xxx. 15, 18, 24; Am. i., ii.

Arnot notices the parallel between the 7 cursed things here and the 7 blessed things in the v. chap. Matt.

b Ps. cxxxi. 1; also Job xxi. 22, xl. 11; Pr. xxx. 13.

"As thou desirest the love of God and man, beware of pride. It is a tumour in the mind, that breaks and poisons all thy actions; it is a worm in thy treasure, wh. eats and ruins thy estate: it loves no man—is beloved of no man; it disparages virtue in another by detraction; it disrewards goodness in itself by vainglory: the friend of the flatterer, the mother of envy, the nurse of fury, the sin of devils, and the devil of mankind, it hates superiors; it scorns inferiors; it owns no equals:—in short, till thou hate it, God hates thee."—*Quarles.*

vv. 16—19. *J. Steele*, 83.

c Dr. Thomas.

subject for a madhouse. We may have excitement in everything else but Christianity.

18, 19. (18) **deviseth,** *etc.*, or fabricating empty, worthless devices.[a] **feet . . mischief,** Ro. iii. 15. Not only doing mischief, but doing it *eagerly*. (19) **false . . lies,** lit. *one that breathes lies*. The social slanderer.[b] Heb. word used is *puach*, to blow out; often used in a bad sense. **soweth discord,** by tale-bearing, ill-natured stories, the look or shrug of the shoulders, etc. Making mischief between relations and neighbours.

Socialism.—"Call it not socialism, call it devilism, for it has made me more a devil than a man," exclaimed a poor dying man, in my neighbourhood, says Mr. James, to one of our town missionaries, who visited him on his death-bed. "I got into company that led me to socialism, and to drinking. I rejected the Bible, denied the Saviour, and persuaded myself there was no hereafter; and as the result acted the part of a bad father and a bad husband. I have the testimony of my master that I was a steady and respectable man until I listened to the Owenites; but since that time I have become a vagabond, and they who formerly knew me have shunned me in the streets. The system of the Owenites is worse than that of Paine." "Such," adds Mr. James, "is the testimony of a dying victim and martyr of socialism, and a similar confession has been made by many others. I have seen the husband, once moral, happy, and useful, as long as he professed religion; and have seen him in his misery, poverty, and ruin, since he has thrown it off: I have heard the impassioned accents of his heart-broken wife, so far as weakness allowed her to be impassioned, exclaiming, as she looked at her miserable companion, 'Oh, sir, he has been a changed man ever since he went among the Owenites!' Such is socialism."[c]

20, 21. (20) **father's,** *etc.*, the usual formula at the beginning of a new section, ch. i. 8. (21) **bind them,** like a charm, or amulet.[a] **tie . . neck,** as were amulets.[b]

Mother's law (*v.* 20).—The injunction is in form addressed to a grown son, that he forsake not in manhood his mother's law. In the pliant time of childhood the character is moulded chiefly by the mother. The mother should be much with her children. In the case of mothers who live in affluence, perhaps trifling is the most pressing danger. But the command of this passage is directly addressed to the child.[c]

The drowning boy and his Bible.—At a meeting of the Aberdeen Auxiliary Bible Society some years since, the following pleasing anecdote was related by an eye-witness of the scene. "Last year," said he, "a vessel from Stockholm was driven upon our coast in a tremendous gale, and became a total wreck. Her condition was such that no human aid could possibly preserve the crew. In a short while after the vessel struck she went to pieces. The persons on shore beheld with grief the awful state of those on board, but could render them no aid. They all perished except one lad; and he was driven by the waves upon a piece of the wreck, entwined among the ropes attached to the mast. Half naked and half drowned, he reached the shore. As soon as they rescued him, they saw a small parcel tied firmly round his waist with a handkerchief. Some thought it was his money; others

a "The Div. eye penetrates the heart. He sees all that passes there, not only the deep plots of evil, the elaborate schemes of thought, and the deliberate purposes, but ideas and emotions in the most incipient and fugitive forms. He judges the man as He sees Him there."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b The slanderer does harm to three persons at once: to him of whom he says the ill, to him to whom he says it, and most of all to himself, in saying it.

v. 18. *Bp. Hopkins*, 117.

v. 19. *J. I. S. Cellerier*, ii. 138.

c Whitecross.

a Like the fillets of the Law, prayer-bands.

b "Perhaps the superstition most common at present is that of charms. People of every rank and station in society, and of every creed and sect, employ them. They are hung round the neck, or hid away in the bosom. . . Those most in repute are brief sentences from their religious books, written with certain formalities, and frequently accompanied with cabalistic diagrams, drawn by those skilled in these magic my-

steries."—*Thomson.*

Pr. i. 9, iii. 3; Song Sol. iv. 9.

vv. 20–22. *W. May*, 51; *Hon. G. T. Noel*, ii. 85.

c Dr. Arnot.

"Mother! How many delightful associations cluster around that word! The innocent smiles of infancy, the gambols of boyhood, and the happiest hours of riper years! When my heart aches at the world's wickedness, and my limbs are weary, and my feet bloody, travelling the thorny path of life, I am accustomed to sit down and close my eyes, and send my spirit back to the days of early life."—*Dr. Thomson.*

"See a fond mother encircled by her children: with pious tenderness she looks around, and her soul even melts with maternal love. One she kisses on its cheek, and clasps another to her bosom; one she sets upon her knee, and finds a seat upon her foot for another. And while, by their actions, by their lisping words, and asking eyes, she understands their numberless little wishes, to these she dispenses a look, and a word to those; and, whether she grants or refuses, whether she smiles or frowns, it is all in tender love. Such to us, though infinitely high and awful,

the ship's papers; and others said it was his watch. The handkerchief was unloosed, and to their surprise it was his Bible.—a Bible given to the lad's father by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Upon the blank leaf was a prayer written, that the Lord might make the present gift the means of saving his son's soul. Upon the other blank leaf was an account of how the Bible came into the father's hands, with expressions of gratitude to the society from which he received it. To this was added a request to his son that he would make it the man of his counsel; and that he could not allow him to depart from home without giving him the best pledge of his love,—a Bible; although that gift deprived the other parts of the family. The Bible bore evident marks of having been often read with tears."—*Influence of a Christian mother.*—There was once an obscure and pious woman living in a city in the south of England. History is silent respecting her ancestry, her place of birth, or her education. She had an only son, whom, in his infancy, she made it her great business to instruct, and train up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. At seven years of age his mother died, and a few years after he went to sea, and became at length a common sailor in the African slave trade. He soon became a great adept in vice—a swearer most horribly profane; and though younger than many of his companions in years, he was the oldest in guilt. But he could not shake off the remembrance of his pious mother's instructions. Though dead and in her grave, she seemed speaking to him still. After many alarms of conscience, and many pungent convictions, he became a Christian, and subsequently one of the most successful ministers of the Gospel our country ever produced. Of course, through the labours of the converted son, we may now trace the influence of the pious mother. In addition to his great ministerial labours, he wrote many evangelical works, and few authors have done more to extend the power of religion. He was highly eloquent and greatly useful in religious conversation; and his hymns, whose use in divine worship is almost commensurate with the extension of the English language, are of the most elevated and evangelical character. Follow that mother's influence farther. Her son was the means of the conversion of Claudius Buchanan, who subsequently became a minister of the Gospel, and went to the East Indies. Here he occupied a responsible station; and his labours in behalf of the English population, and for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of the natives, are deservedly ranked among the noblest achievements of Christian philanthropy. His little work entitled *The Star in the East* was the first thing that attracted the attention of Adoniram Judson to a mission in the East Indies. Hence, had it not been for that mother's faithfulness, her son might never have been converted, Dr. Buchanan never been converted, nor that train of causes put in operation which are now shedding such a flood of light on Burmah and the surrounding regions. The converted sailor was also the means of the conversion of Thomas Scott from the dark mazes of Socinianism to the belief, practice, and preaching of evangelical truth. He was a very successful preacher for a good portion of his long life in the metropolis of England—engaged with vigour and zeal in every enterprise that he thought conducive to the moral welfare and salvation of man. He was, too, the author of a very valuable

commentary on the Bible, almost unequalled in its practical tendency and the extent of its circulation. To that pious mother's influence, operating through the efforts of her son, all this is easily traced. Besides, to the connection of her son with the poet Cowper, the evangelical character and great religious influence of Cowper's poetry are doubtless to be greatly attributed. It was by the heavenly counsels, and prayers, and letters of his clerical friend, that the poet's piety was deepened, and the gloom of his mind dispersed. Again, to this same minister's influence, in connection with that of Doddridge, the conversion of Wilberforce is traced by some. For fourteen years after he first saw Wilberforce, and until his conversion, he made him the constant subject of his prayers. And with what glorious results was the conversion of Wilberforce fraught to the interests of man! What vast contributions did he make with his princely fortune to objects of benevolence! To his influence, in a great degree, may we impute the abolition of the African slave trade, and in subsequent years the emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies; for the former step prepared the way for taking the latter. In addition to this, Wilberforce was the author of *A Practical View of Christianity*, which did much to commend spiritual religion to the higher classes of his countrymen, and which, since his death, has been widely circulated, and widely useful. This book was the means of the conversion of Legh Richmond, the author of the *Dairyman's Daughter*, which has been the means of the conversion of thousands. Such are some of the stupendous and glorious results of one holy woman's efforts to educate her son for God—a wide and mighty posthumous influence which an angel might feel honoured to exert. Who was she? The mother of the Rev. John Newton.

22—24. (22) when, *etc.*, evidently referring to the "law of obedience" to parental counsels, not to the mere amulet. goest . . sleepest . . awakest, terms representing the variety of the experiences of the traveller, through all which high moral principles will keep and bless.[a] (23) lamp, or candle.[b] the law, of moral purity. light, revealing temptation, and the paths of sin. reproofs, or convictions of error.[c] (24) evil woman, woman of evil, ch. ii. 16. flattery, that would entice thee to evil ways,[d] lit. *from the smoothness of the tongue of the strange woman.*

The fisherman and the light.—There was a fisherman once, whose hut was situated on a high and rock-bound coast. Near by was a snug cove, with a smooth, sandy beach, where he was accustomed to draw up his little boat, and from which he went forth, day by day, to engage in his toilsome occupation, on the waters of the stormy sea. One day he went out, as usual, to spend the day in fishing. He toiled on, with encouraging success, till towards the close of the afternoon, when looking up to the sky, he saw threatening signs of an approaching storm. Immediately he hauled up his lines, resolving, if possible, to reach his home before the gathering tempest should burst upon him. But he had a long distance to go, and the wind was ahead, and the sea was rough, and the storm came on fast, and the day was almost gone. Yet with a brave and trusting heart, he turned the bow of his boat in the right direction, and began to row towards home. Right manfully did he bend upon his oars, and

is Providence; so it watches over us, comforting these, providing for those, listening to all, and assisting every one; and if sometimes it denies the favour we implore, it denies but to invite our more earnest prayers; or, if seeming to deny a blessing, it grants one in the refusal." — *Krummacher.*

"The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom."—*Beecher.*

Napoleon being asked, "What is the great want of the French nation?" replied, "Mothers!"

Some children being asked if they knew any one who was always good, one replied, "Yes, sir, I know one —my mother."

a "The Word of God will be our guide, guard, and companion."—*Matt. Henry.*

b Ps. cxix. 105.

c Trans. "And in the way of life is admonitory discipline."—*Miller.*

d "The descrip. of the young man's temptress and her beguiling and fascinating methods is so life-like and minute, that it needs neither explanation nor comment."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

v. 22. *G. Lambert*, 267; *J. Bullar*, 366.

v. 23. *J. Mason*, i. 131.

"And wisdom dwells in secret, and on high, as do the stars. The

sun's diurnal glare is for the daily herd; but for the wise, the cold pure radiance of the night-born light, wherewith is inspiration of the truth."—*Bailey.*

When Eudamides heard old Xenocrates disputing so long about wisdom, he inquired very gravely but archly, "If the old man be yet disputing and inquiring concerning wisdom, what time will he have left to use it?"

"For character groweth day by day, and all things aid it in unfolding, and the bent unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy."—*Tupper.*

his boat flew rapidly over the white-capped billows. But darker and darker grew the heavens above him; and soon all traces of daylight had disappeared. The outline of the coast had faded from his view, and he could no longer see any of those well-known landmarks by which he was accustomed to direct his course. He went as near the coast as he could without being dashed against its jagged rocks. And then he rowed on until he was exhausted; but no sign of his hut, or of the little cove near by, could he discover. The storm raged fiercer, and the night grew darker. Hope died away within him, and death stared him in the face. He expected every moment that his frail boat would be swallowed up in the stormy waters. But just then a faint ray of light met his eye. It renewed his strength. He rowed on more heartily. Very soon he found that it proceeded from the window of his own little hut. It guided him to the cove he was accustomed to enter. He drew his boat up safely on the sand, and, grateful for his own deliverance, before he went to bed that night he trimmed the lamp, and filled it with oil, and set it in the window of his humble dwelling, that its friendly light might shine out upon the stormy sea, and perhaps guide some other tempest-tossed voyager to a place of safety. And as long as he lived he continued this practice. It was very proper that he should do this. He made a right use of the lamp himself, and then he tried to extend the benefit of it to others. And this is just what we should do. We have God's wonderful lamp. It is shining all about our path. It shows us how we may sail over life's stormy sea, so as to reach the haven of enduring rest and safety at last. But there are multitudes of our fellow-creatures who are tossed on this tempestuous sea, without a single ray of light to guide their way. What is our duty? Should we not send this wonderful lamp to them? This is all they need. It is abundantly able to guide them to the only place where they can find safety.[e]

e Rills fr. Fountain of Life.

25, 26. (25) **lust**, the term for vehement and unbridled desire.[a] **take thee**, as in a trap. **eyelids**, wh. Eastern women paint to enhance their beauty.[b] "With which she throws amorous and captivating glances at her lover."[c] (26) **whorish**, strictly one who sells herself for hire.[d] **piece of bread**, the sign of uttermost poverty. **adulteress**, the abandoned woman who is unfaithful as a wife is ever more violent and ruinous than the harlot. **hunt**, lay snares for; take, as fish, with a hook.

a Matt. v. 28.

b "Possibly pointing to the E. custom of painting them on the outside with *kohl*, so as to give brightness and languishing expression to the eyes."—*Spk. Com.*

c Otto Zöckler. 2 Ki. ix. 30.

d A.-S. *hôre;* Ger. *hure;* W. *hurau*, from *huriaw*, to hire; *hur* meaning wages, hire.

Danger of sin.—We might illustrate the evil of sin by the following comparison:—"Suppose I were going along a street, and were to dash my hand through a large pane of glass, what harm would I receive?" "You would be punished for breaking the glass." "Would that be all the harm I should receive?" "Your hand would be cut by the glass." "Yes, and so it is with sin. If you break God's laws, you shall be punished for breaking them, and your soul is hurt by the very act of breaking them."

27—29. (27) **take**, take and heap, as if his bosom were a fire-pan. Breaking physical laws absolutely insures physical penalties: quite as certainly moral woe follows on moral transgressions.[a] (28) **go**, or walk. (29) **so**, *etc.*, "so inconceivable

a Ca. vi. 7, 8.

b "He that keeps company with those of ill fame, that goes in with

is it that the adulterer should follow his unlawful intercourse without evil consequences and just retribution."[b]

Effects of evil habits.—At the first arrival of the Europeans in America it was not uncommon to find Indians who were above a hundred years old. They lived frugally and drank pure water. Brandy, rum, wine, and all the other strong liquors, were utterly unknown to them. But since the Christians have taught them to drink these liquors, and the Indians have found them but too palatable, those who cannot resist their appetites hardly reach half the age of their parents.[c]

30, 31. (30) **despise a thief,** regard him, *i.e.*, with the same feeling as they do the other sinner.[a] **hungry,** the assumption is that hunger is the great impulse to stealing. But this is only the most mitigated form of stealing. (31) **found, found out. sevenfold,** Ex. xxii. 1—4. **all the substance,** if that is necessary to provide ample restitution.

Special need.—"In the first year of my marriage," relates a pious German, "I had one day not a farthing in the house, when my wife came and asked me for a thaler to pay the weaver who was to bring her some cloth home in the evening. There was not a person in the village of whom we could borrow money; and my wife burst into tears. I tried to comfort her by telling her that our heavenly Father knew what we needed, and that perhaps the bad weather might prevent the weaver from coming that day. I commended the matter to the Lord, for I saw no means of human help. In the evening my wife hastily entered the room, and said, 'The weaver is here!' I was just taking down a book from the shelf above me when, at the very moment, a piece of money rolled out of it, and fell rattling on the table. My wife and I stood motionless: we felt distinctly the presence of God, who so exactly knew what we needed, and bestowed it upon us at the very moment when we required it." The money had been put in the book some time before, been forgotten, and was thus providentially discovered in the time of need.

32, 33. (32) **understanding,** discernment, either of the sin or of the consequences: or *heart*, as marg., in the sense of "right feeling;" destitute both of moral principle and of prudence. (33) **wound and dishonour,** better, *stripes and disgrace;* stripes from the insulted husband, and shame from the people, who hoot the detected man. **wiped away,** there is no possible forgiveness to be expected from his injured brother.

The foolish flies.—A dervish once went into a confectioner's shop. The confectioner, to honour him, poured some honey into a dish before him. Immediately a swarm of flies settled, as was their wont, upon the honey: some upon the edge of the dish, but the greater number in the middle. The confectioner then took up a whisk to drive them off, when those upon the side flew away with ease, but the others were prevented from rising by the honey clinging to their wings, and were involved in ruin. The dervish noticed this, and remarked, "That honey-dish is like the world, and the honey like its pleasures. Those who enjoy them with moderation and contentment, when the whisk of death approaches, not having their hearts filled with the love of them, can with ease escape its snare; while all who, like the

them, and touches them, cannot long preserve his innocency; he thrusts himself into temptation, and so throws himself out of God's protection."—*Matt. Henry.*

c *Whitecross.*

a "The laws of modern society have reversed the maxims of Sol., and, to the dishonour of Christian nations, an adulterer, who steals what is most precious to a man, and what is irretrievable, is treated by the law with more lenity than a thief, who robs him of what is of comparatively little value, and may easily be replaced."—*Wordsworth.*

"Even God is said to be unable to use force against necessity."—*Plato.*

"Necessity is stronger far than art."—*Æschylus.*

"Believers do not regulate their marriage relation by caprice. They do not ask divorce at every gust of passion, as one does not amputate a limb bec. it is convulsed with pain."—*Augustine.*

"A husband or wife guilty of adultery ceases to be such; hence he does not put away a wife, but the adulteress."—*De Wette.*

foolish flies, have given themselves wholly to their sweetness, will meet with destruction."[a]

34, 35. (34) jealousy, that of the man whose home is ruined by the adulterer. not spare, when his chance of avenging himself may come. (35) ransom, to buy off from punishment the detected sinner: lit. "*He will not accept the face of any ransom.*" gifts, in hope of appeasing his wrath.

The agony of jealousy.—

But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
Corroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell!—ye gleamings of departed peace,
Shine out your last! The yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps.[a]

a Fr. the Hindustani.

"Trifles light as air, are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ." — *Shakespeare.*

"With groundless fear he thus his soul deceives, what frenzy dictates, jealousy believes."—*Gay.*

a Thomson.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) my son, *etc.*, the usual commencement of a new section: recalling the attention of the listeners. lay up, so as to be ready for use when temptation comes. (2) apple . . eye, lit. *as the little man in thine eye.*[a] Obs. how carefully this is guarded by Nature with the eyelid.

Love to the Holy Scriptures (*vv.* 1—4).—Show—I. The respect we should pay to the counsels of Divine wisdom. 1. They should be treasured up with diligence; 2. They should be watched over with care; 3. They should be kept ready for use; 4. They should be guarded with tenderest affection. II. The benefits which we shall derive from a due attention to them. 1. We shall be delivered from evil; 2. We shall be carried forward in safety to everlasting life.[b]

The Bible a guide.—

Star of Eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man can navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely, the only star which rose on time,
And on its dark and troubled billows still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God—
The eternal hills—pointed the sinner's eye.[c]

3—5. (3) bind . . fingers, as were the words of the Law to be bound by the Mosaic injunction.[a] Or, as inscriptions upon rings. (4) wisdom, wh. had previously been personified as a *woman*, a queen. sister,[b] companion. The word suggests simple and pure relationships and intercourses. kinswoman, or friend: the one known by thee, in familiar intercourse. (5) keep thee, by engaging and absorbing all thine interests, and by giving thee timely warnings and good advice. strange woman, ch. v. 3.

a "The pupil of the eye is the emblem of a precious possession guarded with peculiarly watchful care. See De. xxxii. 10; Ps. xvii. 8; Zec. ii. 12." — *Otto Zöckler.*

b C. Simeon, M.A. There is not one great truth in the Old Testament which is not just as true now as when it was written; nay, rather those truths rose like stars, and now they shine like suns. We understand so much more than the Hebrews of old, that our faith ought to exceed theirs, even as the plant exceeds the germ.

c R. Pollock.

a De. vi. 8, xi. 18.

b Matt. xii. 50.

"There is not a son of Adam, whatever his condition may be, whether in prosperity or in

Authenticity of the Bible.—There are four grand arguments for the truth of the Bible. I. The miracles it records. II. The prophecies it contains. III. The goodness of the doctrine. IV. The moral character of the penman. The miracles flow from Divine power, the prophecies from Divine understanding, the excellence of the doctrine from Divine goodness, and the moral character of the penman from Divine purity. Thus the Bible stands upon four immovable pillars—the power, the understanding, the goodness, and the purity of God.[c]

Adaptation of the Bible.—It is indeed an admirable evidence of the truth and Divine origin of the sacred volume, that for its important practical purposes—especially for the great end of the soul's salvation—it is just as intelligible to the humble but pious cottager as it is to the most learned and cultivated among mankind. The rough Greenlander and Esquimaux, the untutored inhabitant of New Zealand or Otaheite, the wandering North American Indian, the superstitious and degraded Hindoo and Chinese, the Hottentot of South Africa, the negro and Malagassee—ignorant and uncultivated man in almost every part of the world—have all been found capable, with the aid of the most simple Christian teaching, of understanding the Holy Scriptures, so far as relates to their main purpose—I mean that of instructing us in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord; and the same book has been the means of imparting the same knowledge to the polite and civilised Greek and Roman, as well as to the Bacons, Lockes, Boyles, Addisons, and Newtons of the modern times—the most refined and philosophical of our species.[d]

6—9. (6) **window**, "the latticed opening of the kiosk of an Eastern house, overlooking the street."[a] This latticed arrangement was necessary for the circulation of fresh air. (7) **simple ones**, young men having nothing to do, and seeking their pleasure, only too easily putting themselves in the way of temptation. **void of understanding**, better, *discernment*. (8) **corner**, street-corners being always favoured meeting-places. **went**, *etc.*, sauntered along the way by her house: like buzzing moth, putting himself in the way of temptation.[b] (9) **twilight**, the later evening, fr. 9 to 12 o'clock.[c]

A sad sight (*v.* 7).—Who is the young man void of understanding? I. He is one who pays more attention to his outward appearance than to his inner character. II. He is one who seeks happiness without rather than within. III. He is one who identifies greatness with circumstances rather than with character. IV. He is one who is guided more by the dictates of his own nature than by the counsels of experience. V. He is one who lives in show and ignores realities.[d]

A word in season.—One Sabbath morning, while the late Rev. Dr. Bedell, of Philadelphia, was preaching, a young man passed by with a number of companions as gay and thoughtless as himself. One of them proposed to go into the church, saying, "Let us go and hear what this man has to say, that everybody is running after." The young man made this awful answer, "No, I would not go into such a place if Christ Himself was preaching." Some weeks after, he was again passing the church, and being alone, and having nothing to do, he thought he would go in without being observed. On opening the door, he was struck

adversity, in temptation or deliverance, in health or sickness, but he may find in this Book some balmy comfort to the quieting of his conscience and to the advancement of his salvation. In short, the Holy Bible is the great light to our paths, our comfort in affliction, our shield and sword against Satan, the school of wisdom, the testimony of God's favour, and the food and nourishment of our souls." — *T. Bankes.*

c *D. Simpson.*

d *J. J. Gurney.*

a *Spk. Com.* Ju. v. 28.

b "The verb used is fairly chosen, as it always expresses a certain care and intention in his going. We say, substantially, 'he measures his steps, he paces before her door.'"—*Umbreit.*

c "Young, 'simple,' in the bad sense of the word; *open* to all impressions of evil; empty-headed and empty-hearted; lounging near the house of ill-repute, not as yet deliberately purposing to sin, but placing himself in the way of it, wandering idly to see one of whose beauty he had heard."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 7. *S. Partridge*, ii. 219; *G. Matthew*, ii. 155; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 510.

d Dr. Thomas.

"For nothing lovelier can be found in woman, than to study household good, and good works in her husband to promote."—*Milton.*

with awe at the solemn silence of the place, though it was much crowded. Every eye was fixed on the preacher, who was to begin his discourse. His attention was instantly caught by the text—Prov. vii. 7. His conscience was smitten by the power of truth. He saw that he was the young man described. A view of his profligate life passed before his eyes; and for the first time he trembled under the feeling of sin. He remained in the church till the preacher and congregation had passed out, then slowly returned to his home. He had early received infidel principles; but the Holy Spirit, who had aroused him in his folly, led him to a constant attendance on the ministry of Dr. B., who had been the instrument of awakening his mind. He cast away his besetting sin, and gave himself to a life of virtue and holiness. He afterwards declared openly his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his desire to devote himself to His service.

a Otto Zöckler.

b Tit. ii. 5.

"*Temptation to licentiousness.* — There is not a more tried shaft in all Satan's quiver than this: a persuasion to men to bear themselves too bold upon the favour of God. 'Thou art the elect and redeemed of God; sin because grace hath abounded; sin, that it may abound. Thou art safe enough though thou offend; be not too much an adversary to thine own liberty.'"—*Hall.*

"Dress drains our cellar dry, and keeps our larder lean."—*Cowper.*

10—12. (10) **attire**, peculiar in form and colours, so as to attract attention. **harlot**, Ge. xxxiv. 31. **subtil**, Ge. iii. 1, wary, cunning, "one whose heart is guarded and inaccessible, who locks up her plans and counsels deep in her breast."[a] (11) **loud**, prob. bustling, or bold. **stubborn**, fretting against the pure restraints of home, not submissive. **in her house**, where every right-minded woman ought to be in the night time.[b] (12) **streets**, where we might be sure she only intends wantonness and mischief.

On the word attire.—Attire only occurs four times in the Bible—once as a verb, and three times as a noun-substantive: "and with a linen mitre shall he [*i.e.* the high priest] be attired," *i.e.* his head shall be folded with the mitre (Le. xvi. 4); "there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot" (Prov. vii. 10)—here the Hebrew word is a general one, signifying "putting on," but probably refers to the head as the most conspicuous member. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" (Jer. ii. 32)—here the Hebrew word signifies "girdle," but, as it might be all round the head, or a "fillet," our translators probably took it in that sense. The same translators however, not very consistently, rendered the same word "ornaments of the legs," in Isaiah iii. 20, perhaps because they had appropriated "bonnet" to the preceding word, which is, however, a "foot chain" (Gesen.), or "armlet" (Furst). Lastly, Exek. xxiii. 15: "Girded with girdles about their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads," where the translation should be, according to De Wette, "*herabhängenden binden*" (overlapping turbans). In xxiv. 17, "tire," etc., is undoubtedly a head-dress, and in 2 Kings ix. 30, "Jezebel tired her head" (Heb. "adorned" her head). Wedgwood is no doubt right in restricting this word primarily to the head, and connecting it with old French *atour*. Shakespeare uses "tire" for a head-dress. The Persian word "tiara" is not found in the Bible.

13—15. (13) **caught him**, as if in playful joke. **kissed him**, as if she cared for him. **impudent face**, or "she strengthened her face;" putting on her most fascinating looks. (14) **peace . . me**, lit. *peace offerings are upon me.*[a] Her way of saying she had a religious feast on that night, and would be glad for him to come and share. (15) **to meet thee**, so as to give thee a personal invitation.

a "The harlot uses the technical word (Lev. iii. 1) for the 'peace-offerings,' and makes them the starting point for her sin. They have

Modesty.—

"In distant climes a plant there grows,
Which from the touch its leaves will close,
And trembling turn itself away
If aught approach its fragile spray;
Its kindred plant they say abides
Unseen our northern clime beneath.
From ev'ry idle gaze it hides,
And shrinks at ev'ry ruder breath;
Amid the snows it thrives the best
Which guard the virgin's spotless breast.
'Tis Modesty! a lovelier flow'r
Than spring's first snowdrop, born 'mid February's show'r.[b]

to be eaten on the same day that they are offered." — *Spk. Com.*

vv. 14, 15 *N. Ball*, 61.

b Holford.

16—18. (16) **carved**, this word is better connected with the previous sentence, "variegated coverings of tapestry," or with the following.[a] **fine linen**, for wh. Egypt was noted. (17) **perfumed**, *etc.*, the Eastern love of strong scents is remarkable, and they are used as incentives to passion. "These verses point to the art and commerce wh. flourished under Solomon." (18) **cinnamon**, imported prob. fr. Ceylon.

Eastern beds.—"The time for taking our repose was now come, and we were conducted into another large room, in the middle of which was a kind of bed, without bedstead or curtains. Though the coverlet and pillows exceeded in magnificence the richness of the sofa, which likewise ornamented the apartment, I foresaw that I could expect but little rest on this bed, and had the curiosity to examine its make in a more particular manner. Fifteen mattresses of quilted cotton, about three inches thick, placed one upon another, formed the groundwork, and were covered by a sheet of Indian linen, sewed on the last mattress. A coverlet of green satin, adorned with gold embroidered in embossed work, was in like manner fastened to the sheets: the ends of which, turned in, were sewed down alternately. Two large pillows of crimson satin, covered with the like embroidery, in which there was no want of gold or spangles, rested on two cushions of the sofa, brought near to serve for a back, and intended to support our heads. The taking of the pillows entirely away would have been a good resource, if we had had any bolster; and the expedient of turning the other side upwards having only served to show they were embroidered in the same manner on the bottom, we at last determined to lay our handkerchiefs over them, which, however, did not prevent our being very sensible of the embossed ornaments underneath."[b]

a "Striped coverlets of linen of Egypt."

"That modest grace subdu'd my soul, that chastity of look which seems to hang, a veil of purest light, o'er all her beauties, and by forbidding most inflames desires."—*Young.*

b Baron du Tott.

"The excellence of a circle lies in its roundness, not its bigness. The rim of a threepenny bit is a true circle, and would not be mended, but only magnified, if swelled till it equalled in size the tire of a cart wheel, or dilated till it touched the outline of a planet."—*S. Coley.*

19, 20. (19) **goodman**, or husband. So she assures him that there is safety from fear of detection. (20) **a bag of money**, so plainly intends to be away a long time. **time appointed**, or, till the next new moon, *i.e.* a fortnight's time.

Pleasures that end in death.—There are some pleasures that bring pain as their fruit, just as things standing in the sunshine throw from them a black shadow. They are like the smooth, beautiful serpent, they carry a sting. Fable tells of a bee that found a pot of honey ready made, and thought it would be fine to save all the trouble of flying about the meadows and gathering its sweet stores, little by little, out of the cups of flowers, and began to sip out of the dish. Then it went on and revelled in

Jerome writes of a brave woman, who, being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved to die rather than lie.

the sweets; but when it began to get tired and cloyed, it found, poor bee! that its wings were all clogged and would not open, nor could it drag its body out of the mass. So it died, buried in pleasure.[a]

21—23. (21) **fair speech**, the word employed is that usually trans. *doctrine*. "The use of the same word has a keen irony about it wh. it is difficult to convey in another language."[a] **forced him**, to get over all his prudence, his virtue, and his fears. (22) **straightway**, as by a sudden impulse. **as an ox**, blindly, not thinking that he is going to his destruction. **as a fool**, goes on his foolish way, never thinking that the penalties must come.[b] (23) **liver**, put for the vitals generally.

A life of degradation.—Degradation means the application of a thing to purposes lower than that for which it was intended. It is degradation to a man to live on husks, because they are not his true food. We call it degradation when we see the members of an ancient family, decayed by extravagance, working for their bread. It is not degradation for a born labourer to work for an honest livelihood. It is degradation for *them*, for they are not what they might have been. And, therefore, for a man to be degraded, it is not necessary that he should have given himself up to low and mean practices. It is quite enough that he is living for purposes lower than those for which God intended him. He may be a man of unblemished reputation, and yet debased in the truest meaning of the word. We were sent into this world to love God and to love man; to do good; to fill up life with deeds of generosity and usefulness; and he that refuses to work out that high destiny is a degraded man. He may turn away revolted from everything that is gross. His sensuous indulgences may be all marked by refinement and taste. His house may be filled with elegance. His library may be adorned with books. There may be the sounds in his mansion which can regale the ear, the delicacies which can stimulate the palate, and the forms of beauty which can please the eye. There may be nothing in his whole life to offend the most chastened and fastidious delicacy; and yet, if the history of all this be, powers frittered upon time which were meant for eternity, the man is degraded; if the spirit which was created to find its enjoyment in the love of God has settled down satisfied with the love of the world, then that man has turned aside from a celestial feast to prey on garbage.[c]

24, 25. (24) **hearken**, making a most impressive application. (25) **decline**, from the counsels and the principles of wisdom and of purity.

Taking care of the heart.—The great defect in our system of education is that it turns a man away from himself. Many a schoolboy can describe the continents and islands of the earth, trace out the intricacies of the planetary system, naming suns and moons and stars, who would stand abashed should you ask him the number of bones in the human body, or to trace out the marvellous nervous system that God has given him. This begins in the nursery, and is carried all the way up through the University. True, there is some improvement in later days, and those sciences relating more particularly to the philosophy of man's being have been introduced, but they have not the pro-

a Dr. J. Edmond.

a Spk. Com.

b "As a man in chains to the punishment of the fool."—*Wordsworth.*

"Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world but those who slide along the grassy sod, and sting the luckless foot that presses them? There are who in the path of social life do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun, and sting the soul."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"Those who are in the power of evil habits must conquer them as they can; and conquered they must be, or neither wisdom nor happiness can be attained: but those who are yet subject to their influence may, by timely caution, preserve their freedom: they may effectually resolve to escape the tyrant, whom they will very vainly resolve to conquer."—*Johnson.*

c F. W. Robertson.

"I can bear scorpions' stings, tread fields of fire; in frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie; be tossed aloft through tracts of endless void, but cannot live in shame."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"The humblest trade has in it elbowroom for all the virtues. That huckster can be

minence they should have over mathematics and the languages. Now, Christianity turns man's attention to himself. No other teacher ever equalled Christ in this respect. He painted for us the picture of man given up to the wildness of his own passions, and of man in his renewed state, comely to look upon. The inspired writers direct mankind to the spring of life, the source of power and fountain of strength in themselves, and immediately thereafter to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are not surprised that Solomon shows that in man himself are the elements of life and death, of heaven and hell.

26, 27. (26) cast down, as on a field of battle. strong men, better. *mighty hosts.* (27) to hell, ch. ii. 18, v. 5.

Venus.—The Emperor Hadrian very innocently asked Epictetus why Venus was painted naked. The philosopher replied, because she always reduces her followers to such poverty that they have no clothes. The Italians, more knowing, have a proverb, *Bella femina che ride, vuol dir, borsa che piange:* the smiles of a pretty woman are the tears of the purse; the latter must be drained to ensure the continuance of the former.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) cry, making also her good and gracious invitations to the young. put . . voice, loudly and persuasively.[a] (2) high places, fr. which the passers-by may be observed. places of the paths, in the very midst of the roads. (3) gates, where so many are coming and going. coming . . doors, at the very entrance of the city, so as to secure all.

The voice of Divine wisdom (*vv.* 1—14).—I. It is a voice striving for the ear of all. She cries—1. In the most commanding scenes of life: 2. In the ordinary thoroughfares of life; 3. In the most crowded districts of life. II. It is a voice worthy of the ear of all: because her communications are—1. Perfect: 2. Intelligible; 3. Precious; 4. Exhaustless; 5. Rectifying; 6. Original.[b]

The brightness of wisdom.—

> Wisdom, blest beam!
> The brightness of the everlasting light!
> The spotless mirror of the power of God!
> The reflex image of th' all-perfect Mind!
> A stream translucent, flowing from the source
> Of Glory Infinite! A cloudless light!
> Defilement cannot touch, nor sin pollute
> Her unstain'd purity![c]

4—6. (4) men . . sons of man, a distinction is designed between the stronger and experienced, and the weaker and inexperienced. (5) wisdom, or subtlety in a good sense; prudence; rules of self-restraint, and pure ordering of life. understanding, or *discerning.* (6) excellent things, princely things, such as are suitable for a prince, or poss. *plain* things.[a] right, and tending to righteousness.[b]

A scoffer.—A scoffing infidel of considerable talents, being once in the company of a person of slender intellect, but of genuine piety, and supposing no doubt that he should obtain an

true, and honest, and honourable—what more can Rothschild be?"—*S. Coley.*

As the nature of trees and plants, of their roots, stocks, stems, and boughs, is in the seed; so the cause of our transgressions is our own corruption, whereby we are moved to do evil, and hindered to do good.

a "The publicity and universality of the call contrast with the secrecy and intrigues of the wicked."—*Fausset.*

"Wisdom is seen everywhere in the material universe, but her sublimest revelation is in the person of the Son of God."—*Dr. Thomas, D.D.*

vv. 1—5. *J. Norris*, iii. 232.

b Dr. Thomas. Wisdom was personified by the Greeks as Athene or Minerva, a goddess who had no mother, but sprang fully armed from the head of Jupiter. All true wisdom is from above.

c Hannah More.

a "The sense is—I will speak of the mysteries of the *kingdom of heaven.*"—*Wordsworth.*

b "This wisdom is ever in the world. Her voice is everywhere; it rings through the

ages. It is high above all the tumults of the nations. The voices of generations are hushed in graveyards and in seas, but this voice sounds on; it cannot be silenced."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, put the following question to him: "I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die; can you tell me what sort of a place heaven is?" "Yes, sir," replied the Christian; "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom you will never enter there."

7–9. (7) speak, or meditate. wickedness, not untruth only, but all kinds of enticement to wrong-doing. (8) froward, lit. *wreathed;* twisted, contradictory to truth. (9) that understandeth, who is wise enough not to despise, but to open his heart to receive, the counsels of wisdom. The man who wishes to order his life by the teachings of wisdom.[a]

[a] "Those who discern things that differ, who know good and evil, readily subscribe to the rectitude of all Wisdom's dictates, and therefore, without murmuring or disputing, govern themselves by them."—*Matt. Henry.*

The word "froward."—Froward is used by our translators for five Hebrew words, of which two have the force of turning aside, and the other three of being twisted or perverted. The majority of instances are in the Proverbs (chaps. ii., iii., iv., vi., viii., x., xi., xvi., xvii., xxi., xxii.). According to Wedgwood it properly means "from-ward," as opposed to "toward." Hence "toward" as an adjective is used in a favourable sense. The two words are opposed in *Taming of the Shrew*, act v., scene 2:—

Vincentio.—'Tis a good hearing, when children are toward.

Lucentio.—But a harsh hearing, when women are froward.

Preaching self, and Christ.—When Bernard had once preached a very eloquent sermon on a public occasion, the people greatly applauded him; but his own mind was much dejected. On the following day he again preached, but with the utmost simplicity, which did not so well please his audience. When spoken to on the subject, he declared his conviction that in the latter instance only had he discharged his duty; "for," added he, "yesterday I preached Bernard, but to-day Jesus Christ."

Is. xxxv. 8.

Somebody says that politeness is like an air-cushion: there may be nothing in it, but it eases our jolts wonderfully.

b R. T. S.

10, 11. (10) not silver, *i.e.* as being preferable to gaining silver. knowledge, practical knowledge for the guidance of life is meant. choice gold, tried, selected, precious. (11) wisdom, *etc.*, comp. Job xxviii. 15; Ps. xix. 10; Pr. iii. 15, xvi. 16. rubies, Heb. *peninim*, prob. pearls.

Worth of wisdom.—If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. The price of wisdom is above rubies. The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red, fiery colour. It is reported of one of the kings of India, he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendour, that he might be seen by it in the dark; but wisdom casts a more sparkling colour than the ruby, it makes us shine as angels.

vv. 10, 11. *Bp. Maltby*, 363; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 234.

Some persons proceed as if they expected to obtain wisdom as some Chinese philosophers thought oysters got their pearls, by gaping.

12, 13. (12) prudence, or *subtlety;* the wisdom of the serpent, wh. our Lord commended.[a] "Practical tact and insight needed for the life of common men."[b] witty inventions, skilful counsels: sagacious counsels. (13) fear . . evil, hating evil is one sure sign of it (Job i. 1). froward, ch. ii. 12, vi. 14.

[a] Mat. x. 16.

[b] *Spk. Com.*

v. 13. *D. Lamont*, i. 257.

Example of wisdom.—The property of cords contracting their length by moisture became generally known, it is said, on the raising of the Egyptian obelisk in the square facing St. Peter's, at Rome, by order of Pope Sixtus V. The great work was

"Wisdom is the olive that springeth from the heart, bloometh on the tongue, and beareth fruit

undertaken in the year 1586; and the day for raising the obelisk was marked with great solemnity. High mass was celebrated at St. Peter's; and the architect and workmen received the benediction of the pope. The blast of a trumpet was the given signal, when engines were set in motion by an incredible number of horses; but not until after fifty-two unsuccessful attempts had been made, was the huge block lifted from the earth. As the ropes which held it had somewhat stretched, the base of the obelisk could not reach the summit of the pedestal; when a man in the crowd cried out, "Wet the ropes!" This advice was followed; and the column, as of itself, gradually rose to the required height, and was placed upright on the pedestal prepared for it.

14—16. (14) sound wisdom, Heb. *tushiyyah*, the very *essence* of things, whence they derive their soundness and strength,[a] *comp.* ch. ii. 7. have strength, as a possession, result, or attribute of wisdom. Understanding is a constant source of power. (15) by me, or in the exercise of wisdom only can rulers maintain authority. princes, *lit.* those who engrave just decrees. (16) princes, a different word from that in former *v.*[b] This means leaders, commanders.

The authority of Divine wisdom (*vv.* 15—21).—Wisdom here speaks of herself as the queen of the world. I. In the exercise of her authority she determines the destiny of rulers. 1. It inspires all the good actions of kings; 2. It controls all the bad actions of kings. II. In the exercise of her authority she has a special regard for the good. 1. It loves its lovers: 2. Is accessible to her early seekers. III. In the exercise of her authority she has the distribution of the choicest blessings for mankind. 1. One enriches the man himself; 2. Is substantial; 3. Is more permanent.[c]

The all-wise God.—He is best able to counsel, none like Him. He is a wonderful Counsellor. He is furnished with knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness; He sees, observes, considers, understands all things, with their consequences and causes. He is engaged to counsel. His goodness engages Him: this will not suffer poor souls blindly to run upon their own ruin. His truth engages Him: He must be as good as His word; He has promised to guide the meek.[d]

17. I love, "Div. wisdom has heart as well as intellect; it glows with sympathies as well as radiates with counsels. Love is its genius, its root, its essence."[a] love me, bec. love secures the devotion of the whole being. We give ourselves wholly to those whom we love. seek me early, diligently, as one who rises early to accomplish a purpose; but including the idea of early in life.[b]

Motives to early piety (*v.* 17).—I. God has given you peculiar encouragements to seek Him while you are young. II. Youth is for many reasons incomparably the best time for seeking the Lord. III. God has a right to your best services. IV. Let me urge upon you the happiness you will secure by having God for your friend. V. Let me urge upon you the danger of delay. VI. A distinguished place in heaven is the certain result of early piety.—*Those whom Christ loves.*—I. The foundation of that love which Christ feels for all who love Him was laid in eternity. II. Christ

in the actions."—*E. Grymestone.*

"Knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only; or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain for her master's use; but as a spouse, for generation, fruit, and comfort."—*Lord Bacon.*

a Wordsworth.

"This wisdom is ever in the world. Her voice is everywhere; it rings through the ages. It is high above the tumults of the nations. The voices of generations are hushed in graveyards and in seas; but this voice sounds on; it cannot be silenced."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b v. 15, Heb. *rozenim*; *v.* 16, Heb. *sarim.*

Da. ii. 21; Ro. xiii. 1—6.

c Dr. Thomas.

d G. Barker (1659).

a Comp. Jno. xiv. 21; Mat. vii. 7, 8.

b Illus. of early seekers after God, Joseph, Samuel, David, Obadiah, Josiah, Daniel.

"Give God the blossom of your life; put Him not off with the fallen leaves."—*Nicholls.*

"Early life is the time to seek wisdom. Our moral metal is fluid in youth, and we can be

run into any mould; in age it becomes hard as the granite, or the steel. It must be sought to be obtained, and the sooner in life the better."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

c Dr. E. Payson.

v. 17. *Dr. J. Donne*, vi. 1; *J. Abernethy*, iii. 166; *Dr. J. Guyse*, 104; *Dr. S. Chandler*, iv. 461; *Dr. N. Lardner*, x. 171; *Dr. W. Dodd*, i. 1; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 480.

d Dr. Guise.

"Piety is the only proper and adequate relief of decaying man. He that grows old without religious hopes, as he declines into imbecility, and feels pains and sorrows incessantly crowding upon him, falls into a gulf of bottomless misery, in which every reflection must plunge him deeper and deeper."—*Johnson.*

"Industry has a firmer muscle, is less annoyed by delays and repulses, and, like water, bends itself to the shape of the soil over which it flows, and if checked, will not rest, but accumulates, and mines a passage beneath, or seeks a side-race, or rises above and overflows the obstruction. What genius performs at one impulse, industry gains by a succession of blows. In ordinary matloves those who love Him, because He has done and suffered so much for their salvation. III. Because they are united to Him by strong and indissoluble ties. IV. Because they possess His spirit and wear His image. V. Because they rejoice in and return His affection. Learn:—1. Answer the question, Does Christ love me? 2. He will love those most who are most ready to return His affection: 3. How happy are they who love! 4. Inducements to love Christ.[c]—*Early seekers encouraged.*—I. What it is to seek Christ early. It is to seek Him early with respect—1. To the time of life; 2. To the day of grace; 3. To all other things. II. Their peculiar encouragements. 1. Most pleasing to Him; 2. It is the ordinary course of Divine grace to be found of such; 3. They have fewer obstructions than others; 4. There are peculiar promises to them. Apply:—(1) The sin of seeking those things that hinder the seeking of Christ: (2) Pray over the encouragements till they are found effectual; (3) Let early seekers go on to seek Him in all His ways: (4) Let not older sinners think themselves excluded from all hope.[d]—*Early conversions.*—The moment children are capable of sinning—breaking God's law—that moment they are capable of repenting, of turning to God, of understanding the doctrines and precepts of the Bible—repentance, faith, and a holy life. Children, taught as they should be from early infancy, know and feel that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God, and that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

A young lady in a Sabbath school, a few mornings since, asked her class how soon a child should give its heart to God. One little girl said, "When thirteen years old;" another, "ten;" another, "six." Then, at length, the last child in the class spoke: "Just as soon as we know who God is." "I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me" (Prov. viii. 17). Parent, where is your faith? "According to your faith be it unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Seek first"—for your little ones—"the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you." Samuel was a little child when he ministered unto the Lord, and heard His voice. "And he grew, and the Lord was with him; and the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh." Paul, speaking of little Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." These are examples left on record by the Spirit of grace, to teach us what may be done, in the strength and wisdom of the Most High. The Holy Spirit never strikes more powerfully than in early childhood. The late Countess of Huntingdon was only a little child when she gave her heart to Christ; and she was not only rich in this world, but eminently "rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom." Who can read the early conversion and life of the wife of President Edwards, and doubt her being a child of God? or the thrilling narrative which he gives of Phœbe Bartlett, a child but five years old? For seventy years she testified to God's love in revealing Himself to a child. In the late memoirs of Rev. Dr. Justin Edwards it is stated that the heavenly conversion and Christian spirit manifested in her last sickness were the means of spiritual

life to this eminent servant of Christ. One who has long been a "mother in Israel," and whose deep spirituality and holy life had given her an extended influence of the happiest kind, was wont to say, she could not remember the time when she did not love Christ and find her greatest delight in doing His will. In her life and in her death she has given the most satisfactory evidence of religion pure and undefiled.

Youthful piety.—A little girl in London, about four years of age, was one day playing with her companions. Taking them by the hand, she led them to a shed in the yard, and asked them all to kneel down, as she was going to pray to God Almighty: "but don't you tell my mamma," said she, "for she never prays, and would beat me if she knew that I did." Instead of keeping the secret, one of her playmates went directly and told this little girl's mother, who was very much struck, but for the present took no notice. Some time after, on her going within doors, her mother asked her what she had been doing in the yard. She tried to avoid giving a direct answer. The question being repeated, the answer was the same; when her mother having promised not to be angry with her, and pressing the inquiry by very kind words, she said, "I have been praying to God Almighty." "But why do you pray to Him?" "Because I know He hears me, and I love to pray to Him." "But how do you know He hears you?" This was a difficult question indeed; but mark her reply. Putting her little hand to her heart, she said, "Oh, I know He does, because there is something here that tells me He does." This language pierced her mother's heart, who was a stranger to prayer herself, and she wept bitterly. "I love them that love Me; and they that seek Me early shall find Me."[e]

18, 19. (18) **riches,** *see* ch. iii. 16. **durable riches,** increasing, or accumulating riches.[a] With perhaps an allusion to the transitory character of merely *earthly* riches.[b] **righteousness,** *see* v. 20. (19) **my fruit,** *comp.* fig. ch. iii. 14, 18. **fine gold,** or refined gold from the ore. **revenue,** or return to those who trade with me.[c]

Religion invaluable (v. 19).—Money, which answereth all things, cannot touch some things. Let us look—I. To that which is brought before us in the text—wisdom. 1. It is spiritual; 2. Divine; 3. Holy, practical. II. Its incomparable worth. 1. Value of gold, etc., premised; precious metals convenient medium of commerce, beautiful in themselves, for the earthly good they secure; give power of extended usefulness, often ameliorate afflictions and extend duration of life; 2. Wisdom is better, in its nature, adapted to higher order of things and being, because of supreme blessings which it brings; better as to duration, as to the highest influences, as to absolute essentiality. Apply:—(1) Value gold, etc., rightly; (2) Wisdom more.[d]

Knowledge and wisdom.—

Knowledge descries alone, wisdom applies;
That makes some fools, this maketh none but wise.
In my afflictions, knowledge apprehends
Who is the Author, what the cause and ends:
It finds that patience is my sad relief,
And that the hand that caused can cure my grief.
To rest contented here is but to bring
Clouds without rain, and heat without a spring;

ters they differ only in rapidity of execution, and are upon one level before men, who see the result but not the process."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"We meet a class that we can only liken to lead,—heavy, dull; body, brains, arms, and legs made of about the same material; mind, heart, pluck, made of the same dead, dull, dark, crocky, muddy substance; no more life or elasticity than a dead lump of lead."—*Read.*

e Whitecross.

a Ps. lxii. 10.

b When King Demetrius had sacked and razed the city of Megæra to the very foundations, he demanded of Stilpo, the philosopher, what losses he had sustained. "None at all," said Stilpo, "for war can make no spoil of virtue."

"The special idea conveyed is that of a treasure piled up for many years, ancient wealth."—*Spk. Com.*

c Re. iii. 18.

d Dr. Burns.

"Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop, than when we soar."—*Wordsworth.*

But sacred wisdom doth apply that good
Which simple knowledge barely understood.
Wisdom concludes, and in conclusion proves
That wheresoever God corrects He loves.[c]

[c] *Quarles.*

20, 21. (20) I lead, or walk, inviting others to follow. righteousness, essentially right paths, so right towards God, and right towards man. paths of judgment, ways of life to which good counsel, not mere accident or self-will, directs. (21) inherit substance, all who seek wisdom being sure to find full satisfaction in wisdom herself.[a]

[a] "Wisdom being riches and honour, there is enough in wisdom's self to make a heritage of for them that love her. In fact, our eternal heirdom will be this peerless wisdom."—*Miller.*

The benefits of knowledge.—The more we extend our knowledge of the operations of the creative power, as manifested in the structure and economy of organised beings, the better we become qualified to appreciate the intentions with which the several arrangements and constructions have been devised, the art with which they have been accomplished, and the grand comprehensive plan of which they form a part. By knowing the general tendencies of analogous formations, we can sometimes recognise designs that are but faintly indicated, and trace the links which connect them with more general laws. By rendering ourselves familiar with the handwriting, where the characters are clearly legible, we gradually learn to decipher the more obscure passages, and are enabled to follow the continuity of the narrative through chapters that would otherwise appear mutilated and defaced. Hence the utility of comprehending in our studies the whole range of the organised creation, with a view to the discovery of final causes, and obtaining adequate ideas of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God.[b]

"The man of knowledge lives eternally after his death, while his members are reduced to dust beneath the tomb. But the ignorant man is dead, even while he walks upon the earth: he is numbered with living men, and yet existeth not."—*Anon.*

[b] *Roget.*

22—24. (22) possessed me, the best word for conveying the idea that wisdom was of the very essence of God from the absolute beginning.[a] before his works, the things of the material creation. (23) set up, *Spk. Com.* thinks should be, "I was anointed;" perhaps better is, ordained, inaugurated. (24) no depths, *see* Gen. i. At first there was but chaos, "emptiness and confusion."[b] abounding with, or laden with.

[a] The ancient Fathers regarded this passage as referring to the eternal generation of Christ.

The Redeemer's delight in the children of men (*v.* 23).—Define wisdom, and take the word to mean the Messiah. I. The striking picture which is here presented. 1. Christ in His state of pre-existence; 2. The mutual affection and joy between Him and His Father; 3. The feelings with which He regarded this lower world, and the beings by whom it was to be occupied. II. The important precepts which are here enforced. 1. Listen to His voice; 2. Perseverance in the pursuit; 3. Reward attending it; 4. Sin of those who reject the authority of Christ.

[b] "A world of waters, 'great deeps' lying in darkness, this was the picture of the remotest time of which man could form any conception, and yet the co-existence of the uncreated wisdom with the eternal Jehovah was before that."—*Spk. Com.*

The imperfection of knowledge.—Among the Romans, Nasica was called Corculum for his pregnancy of wit; among the Grecians, Democritus Abderita was called wisdom itself; among the Britons, Gildas was called the sage; among the Jews, Aben Ezra was called Hechachan. They said of him that if knowledge had put out her candle, at his brain she might light it again; and that his head was the throne of wisdom. Among the Israelites was Ahithophel, whose counsel was an oracle. Here, now, was a pack of wise men: but why the Nile should overflow in the summer, when waters are at the lowest; or why the loadstone should draw iron to it, or incline to the polestar,—

v. 22. *T. Cheminais*, ii. 1; *J. Brine*, 441.

v. 23. *E. Erskine*, iii. 390.

"Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must

which of them, with all their knowledge, can give a reason of either? And as in human, so in Divine knowledge: the most acute and judicious have and must acknowledge their ignorance, and deplore their errors on divers points. We know but in part. If He that learned His divinity among the angels, to whom the Holy Ghost was an immediate tutor, knew but in part, it is well with us if we know but part of that part.[c]

25, 26. (25) **settled**, Job xxviii. 9, xxxviii. 6. **before the hills**, Ps. xc. 2. (26) **fields**, or open unoccupied commons, or plains. **highest . . world**, the first clods of the earth: the first atoms of the dust.

Wisdom of God in creation.—Were the air divested of its undulating quality, we should be deprived of all the advantages of speech and conversation, and of all the pleasures of music. Were it deprived of its reflective powers, the sun would appear in one part of the sky in dazzling brightness, while all around would appear dark as midnight, and the stars would be visible at noonday. Were it deprived of its refractive powers, instead of the gradual approach of day and night, which we now experience, we should be transported all at once from midnight darkness to the splendours of noonday; and at sunset should make a sudden transition from the splendours of day to all the horrors of midnight. In fine, were the oxygen of the air completely extracted, destruction would seize on all the tribes of the living world, throughout all the regions of earth, air, and sea.[a]

27—29. (27) **a compass**, or circle, referring to the great vault of heaven, which appears like a circle or a dome. (28) **fixed the clouds**, lit. *made firm, or strong.*[a] **strengthened**, *etc.*, better trans. "when the fountains of the deep raged violently." (29) **decree**, *etc.*, comp. Job xxxviii. 4, 10, 11.[b] **his commandment**, or the shore He fixed for their restraint.

Magnitude of creation.—This earth wanders not alone; but a sweet fellowship of sister-spheres is bound together, cheering each other from afar, and from one telling it to all of a mutual law and indissoluble bond. Within the limits of this smaller economy burns the sun, so that in the act of creation, from which our abode arose, we necessarily include all the planetary apparatus, knowing that there the centre was fixed, and that each globe was launched in its circlings around it. The mundane and sublunary form only a little fragment of the work, an inferior department of the great transaction. And what are the few worlds which sweep with us about the same source of life and light? Massive, ponderous in themselves; some of them immensely larger than our own, running wider revolutions, and drawing after them brighter trains. But even this one solar family, recognising and claiming members in the outskirts of space,—it is as nothing to what the eye can command, nothing to the visible! What constellations are thrown over the firmament in all the profusion of beauty and magnificence! And when the unaided sense has roamed to its utmost ken, and gazed to its utmost strength, it may call the instruments of science to its assistance; and it shall look out on ampler territories, and take hold of larger notices. Now we leave our nook. We speak in no terms of exaggeration when we describe what we see as beds, and floors, and clouds, of stars. As we pierce the awful altitudes,

be first kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself." —*Johnson.*

c Spenecr.

"Knowledge hath two pillars, learning and discretion. The greatest scholar without his two eyes of discretion and honesty, is like blind Samson; apt to no good, able to much mischief." —*T. Adams.*

"To be wise too late is the exactest definition of a fool."—*Young.*

a Dr. Dick.

a "The clouds are, as in Job xxvi. 8, xxxviii. 37, conceived of as bags, which only in case they are suitably secured and do not burst, prevent the mighty outpouring of the upper waters upon the earth." —*O. Zöckler.*

b Ge. i. 9, 10; Ps. civ. 9.

vv. 27—31. *P. H. May*, 3.

"In nature all is managed for the best with the utmost frugality and just reserve, profuse to none but bountiful to all; never employing on one thing more than enough, but with exact economy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principal in everything." —*Shaftesbury.*

Who is wise? "He that winneth," not riches, not honours, but "souls, is wise."

c Dr. R. W. Hamilton.

we ascend to new wonders. Apertures constantly open, and we are just suffered a glimpse into them. Heaven spreads above heaven, new arrangements stand revealed, and celestial bodies, in shapes hitherto undeveloped, flame as at the portal of the Eternal Throne, to guard its access and proclaim its terribleness. Yet even there are proofs that discovery has not closed its researches; still avenue verges from avenue, and height rises into height. And after all, this is but the outer court of "His high and holy place."[c]

30, 31. (30) **one brought up**, or as directress of the work. "I was as His artificer."[a] **daily delight**, comp. the Divine complacency in the daily works of creation, Ge. i. 4, 10, 12, 31. (31) **habitable part**, *lit.* in the world of His earth; *i.e.* in the whole of His creation, but with special reference to man as the crown of God's creation.[b]

a "This falls in best with the special point of the whole passage, the creative energy of wisdom."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Redemption is no after thought in the Div. procedure. The world was built as its theatre, and Christ was foreordained before its foundation. Its redemption was contemplated by Him in eternity, and was then a source of joy." — *Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

For connection of this passage with the Div. Word, Logos, comp. Jno. i. 3, 18; Col. i. 17, etc.

The joy of Christ in the world (*v.* 31).—I. As the medium of the manifestations of the Divine perfections. II. As the home of a race of rational and accountable creatures. III. As the scene of His own incarnation. IV. As the battle-field on which He conquers all His enemies. V. As the theatre of His works of benevolence and compassion. VI. As the territory within which He was to erect His kingdom.[c]

Creation for ever in progress.—How close does it bring the Creator to us to regard Him, not so much as having made the world, as still engaged in making it; *i.e.* by supplying the life on which its laws, and thus its being and incidents, depend. It is an ill-constructed theology which regards God as having created only in past ages. A gorgeous sunset, the leafing of a tree in the sweet spring-time, betokens the Divine hand no less palpably than did the miracles which provided the hungry multitudes of Galilee with food. Depend upon it (says an eloquent preacher), it is not the want of greater miracles, but of the soul to perceive such as are allowed us still, that makes us push all the sanctities into the far spaces we cannot reach. The devout feel that wherever God's hand is, there is miracle; and it is simply an undevoutness which imagines that only where miracle is, can there be the real hand of God. He who will but discern beneath the sun, as he rises any morning, the supporting finger of the Almighty, may recover the sweet and reverent surprise with which Adam gazed on the first dawn in Paradise; and if we cannot find Him there—if we cannot find Him on the margin of the sea, or in the flowers by the wayside—I do not think we should have discovered Him any more on the grass of Gethsemane or Olivet.[d]

c G. Brooks.

J. Flavel, i. 42.

v. 31. *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 72.

d Grindon.

32, 33. (32) **unto me**, wisdom, now conceived as "wide as the universe, eternal as Jehovah, ordering all things; no longer merely as prudence, calculation, and human experience."[a] **blessed**, *etc.*, see Ps. cxix. 1, 2, cxxviii. 1. (33) **refuse it not**, from any disposition of self-will or pride.

Fearing Christ (*v.* 32).—No sight so lovely as a religious youth. I. To hearken to Christ is to hear His voice, which deserves to be heard; is a kind voice, an entreating voice, a pardoning voice, a comforting voice. II. To hearken to Christ is to believe His Gospel; Christ speaks in the Gospel, speaks to you, that He died for you to receive all the blessings made known in the Gospel.

a Spk. Com.

b Dr. A. Fletcher. Bp. Fulford, i. 172.

vv. 33, 34. *Dr. J. Erskine*, i. 135.

"Hell fire burns with rage, and meets with fuel fully prepared for it, when God dooms unto it a

III. To hearken to Christ is to obey His laws. In this obedience of faith true blessedness is found.[b]

The end of knowledge.—The knowledge we acquire in this world I am apt to think extends not beyond the limits of this life. The beatific vision of the other life needs not the help of this dim twilight; but be that as it will, I am sure the principal end why we are to get knowledge here, is to make use of it for the benefit of ourselves and others in this world; but if by gaining it we destroy our health, we labour for a thing that will be useless in our hands; and if by harassing our bodies (though with a design to render ourselves more useful), we deprive ourselves of the abilities and opportunities of doing that good we might have done with a meaner talent, which God thought sufficient for us, by having denied us the strength to improve it to that pitch which men of stronger constitutions can attain to, we rob God of so much service, and our neighbour of all that help which, in a state of health, with moderate knowledge, we might have been able to perform. He that sinks his vessel by overloading it, though it be with gold and silver and precious stones, will give his owner but an ill account of his voyage.[c]

34—36. (34) watching, lit. *so as to be set watching.* Wisdom renewing the earnestness and high purpose day by day. (35) life, the symbol of all good and blessing. favour, or gracious acceptance. (36) sinneth against, better, *misseth me.* wrongeth . . soul, "sin is folly, and the greatest sinner, whatever his talents and attainments may be, is the greatest fool." love death, or act as if they did.[a]

The blessedness of fearing Christ (*v.* 34).—Early piety is not only lovely, but blessed. I. Good children who hear Christ are blessed with wisdom. Two kinds of wisdom, human and Divine: the former we get from human teachers, the latter from Christ. Christ as a teacher. II. They are blessed with purity. III. With pardon. IV. With adoption.[b]

Advantage of knowledge.—In England, a man of small fortune may cast his regards around him, and say, with truth and exultation, "I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts, which even a king could not command some centuries ago. There are ships crossing the seas in every direction to bring me what is useful to me from all parts of the earth. In China, men are gathering the tea-leaf for me; in America, they are planting cotton for me; in the West India Islands, they are preparing my sugar and coffee; in Italy, they are feeding silkworms for me; in Saxony, they are shearing the sheep to make me clothing; at home, powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me, making cutlery for me, and pumping the mines, that the materials useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have post-coaches running day and night, on all the roads, to carry my correspondence; I have roads, and canals, and bridges to bear the coal for my winter fire: nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among all these people who serve me. And in a corner of my house, I have books; the miracle of all my possessions, for they transport me instantly not only to all places, but to all times. By my books, I can conjure up before

head full of light and a heart full of lusts; those who know God's will but do it not, do but carry a torch with them to hell, to fire that pile which must for ever burn them."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

"How often has wisdom knocked at human hearts but to repay their hospitality!"—*Young.*

c Locke.

a Pr. iv. 13, 22, vii. 27; Eze. xviii. 31.

"Those that offend Christ do the greatest wrong to themselves; they wound their own consciences, bring a blot and stain upon their souls, wh. renders them odious in the eyes of God, and unfit for communion with Him; they deceive themselves, destroy themselves."—*Matt. Henry.*

b Dr. A. Fletcher.

"In the performance of its sacred offices it fears no danger, spares no expense, looks in the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, encircles the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, ascends to the sublime—no place too remote for its grasp, no

heavens too exalted for its reach."—*De Witt Clinton.*

me, to vivid existence, all the great and good men of antiquity; and for my individual satisfaction, I can make them act over again the most renowned of their exploits: the orators declaim for me; the historians recite; the poets sing: in a word, from the equator to the pole, and from the beginning of time until now, by my books, I can be where I please."[e]

e Dr. Arnott.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1, 2. (1) **builded her house,**[a] where she may entertain all who seek her. **seven pillars,** seven, as usual, indicating completeness, perfection.[b] Pillars, as the emblem of strength. Roofs were usually, in ancient times, supported by pillars. (2) **killeth,** *etc.*, lit. killed her killing. Flesh was a part of the provision at Eastern banquets. **mingled her wine,** it seems that myrrh and other spices were used to increase the flavour of wines.[c]

Wisdom's feast (*vv.* 1—6).—A parable. Wisdom generally used to signify religion; sometimes a name to signify Christ. I. The feast prepared. 1. The banqueting-house is built; ordinances; 2. Feast prepared. II. The invitation given. Those invited are the simple, those who want something; the invitation is to you.[d]

The province of wisdom.—

The most material, immaterial
Departments of pure wisdom are despised.
For well we know that, properly prepared,
Souls self-adapted knowledge to receive,
Are by the truth desired, illumined; man's
Spirit, extolled, dilated, clarified,
By holy meditation and divine
Lore, fits him to convene with purer powers,
Which do unseen surround us, aye, and gladden
In human good and exaltation; thus
The face of heaven is not more clear to one
Than to another outwardly; but one
By strong intention of his soul perceives,
Attracts, unites himself to essences
And elemental spirits of wider range,
And more beneficent nature, by whose aid
Occasion, circumstance, futurity,
Impress on him their image, and impart
Their secrets to his soul; thus chance and lot
Are sacred things: thus dreams are verities.
The soul which, like the mountain lakelet, lifts
Its gaze to heaven alone, will learn ere long
To read the cloudy forms of future days
Which glass them in its vision; or perceive,
Clear through the crystal egg of time, the play
Of spirits and forecomingness of things.[e]

3, 4. (3) **maidens,** servants; the female word may be chosen bec. wisdom is represented as a queen, or bec. of the attractions presented by the wicked woman in ch. vii. **highest places,** conspicuous places. (4) **simple,** open, humble, and sincere.[a]

The educational temple, or Christianity school (*vv.* 1—6).—

a Note the similarities bet. this parable and some of those given by our Lord, *e.g.* The Great Supper, the Wedding Feast.

b "Wisdom builded her house and erected seven pillars, wh. number designates the unity of the Churches, inasmuch as seven expresses universality."—*St. Augustine.*

"The Church is here called the house of Wisdom, who is said to have hewn out seven pillars, bec. they are supported by the strength of Him who is perfect, and bec. seven is the number of perfection."—*St. Gregory.*

Comp. Jas. iii. 17; Re. i. 4, 12.

c Isa. v. 22; Pr. xxiii. 30.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Bailey.

a Plato had inscribed on the door of his school, "Let none but geometricians enter here;" but

The school which wisdom has reared for man in Christianity. I. The firmness of its structure. II. The adaptation of its provisions—nature—variety. III. The invitations of its messengers—earnest—universal. IV. In the blessedness of its aim.[b]

The use of knowledge.—Half our pleasures, our best pleasures, the most innocent and congenial to our nature as rational beings, are derived from the acquisition of ornamental knowledge, the pursuit of entertaining science, or the practice of elegant arts. So far, therefore, as mental recreation is requisite for man, the study of such things may be justified without referring to anything but the satisfaction of the individual himself in his vacant hours. But beyond the point of strict necessity for relaxation this reason will never extend. There must be a higher aim, an honourable and substantial end to be gained, before any considerable employment of the powers of the understanding in the acquisition of any lighter species of intellectual attainment can be fairly vindicated; and that vindication the difficulties of Scripture afford. For the golden chain of science is so firmly and admirably formed, that it would be impossible to take away the least link without injuring the strength and beauty of the whole. Since, therefore, the whole body of knowledge tends, in consequence of the existence of difficulties, to the elucidation of Scripture, the cultivation even of the merely ornamental parts of learning is requisite to the defence of revelation, and, consequently, justifiable in a still larger extent than it would otherwise have been. The minutest branches of philosophy, and the most trivial recreations of the mind, thus become important in a religious point of view. We are evidently, therefore, deeply indebted to the difficulties of Scripture, because by making every species of knowledge subservient to the illustration and vindication of religious truth, they have dignified and sanctified, as it were, the scientific amusements of our leisure hours, and heightened the pleasure of studying the subordinate branches of literature, by teaching us that we may be usefully employed, even in our intellectual relaxations.[c]

5, 6. (5) **bread . . wine**, this may be compared with our Lord's words in the institution of the Lord's Supper.[a] (6) **foolish**,[b] always, in Scrip., conceived as also wicked. Foolish in following the devices and desires of their own hearts.

The morality of trade.—A carpenter, who was tired of making an honest living, came to a gentleman in Philadelphia with a petition for a tavern license, which he requested him to sign. The gentleman looked at him, and asked him why he did not stick to his plane and bench. The answer was, "Tavern-keeping is a more lucrative trade; I want to get richer." "Well, but do you not think you will be affording additional facilities to drunkards to destroy themselves?" "Perhaps I shall." "Do you not believe that at least five men every year will die drunkards if you succeed in getting a license?" "Why, I never thought of that before; but I suppose it would be so." "Then, if the Lord lets you keep tavern for ten years, fifty men will have died through your agency; now, what becomes of the drunkard? Does he go to heaven?" "I suppose not." "I am sure he does not, for no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. What becomes of him, then?" "Why, he must go to hell." "Well, do you not think it will be just if the Lord, at

on the portals of the Christian school is written, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither."

b Dr. Thomas.

"The government of the tongue, considered as a subject of itself, relates chiefly to conversation; to that kind of discourse which usually fills up the time spent in friendly meetings and visits of civility. And the danger is, lest persons entertain themselves and others at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue, and to the injury or offence of their neighbour. If they will observe, and keep clear of these, they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved as they can desire."—*Bishop Butler.*

c Benson.

a Lu. xxii. 19, 20.

b "No coming to this feast in the tattered rags of the old Adam: you must relinquish your former evil courses and companies."—*Trapp.*

v. 5. J. Brydane, iv. 1.

v. 6. G. J. Zollikoffer, ii. 151; *Abp. Secker*, ix. 309.

"Wisdom consists in the choice of the best ends, and the use of the most appropriate means to accomplish those ends."—*R. Watson.*

a *Whitecross.*

the end of ten years, sends you down to hell too, to look after those fifty drunkards?" The man threw down his petition, went back to his honest occupation, and was never tempted to desire a license again.[c]

a "Here caution is given how we tender reprehensions to arrogant and scornful natures, whose manner it is to esteem it for contumely, and accordingly to return it."—*Lord Bacon.*

b *Wordsworth.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

7, 8. (7) reproveth a scorner,[a] *comp.* Mat. vii. 1—5. a blot, "or rather *his blot*, he will be sullied with his stain."[b] (8) hate thee, for pointing to his wilful ways, and spoiling his pleasure in walking in them.

Reproof (vv. 7—9).—The text leads us to consider reproof in two aspects. I. As injuriously administered. II. As usefully administered. 1. By rebuking a wise man you enlist his affection; 2. By instructing a wise man you render him a benefit.[c]

A reproof.—The Rev. John Maclaurin, of Glasgow, well known to the world by his valuable Christian writings, in passing one day along the street, was disturbed by the noise of some disorderly soldiers. One of them particularly, just as Mr. Maclaurin approached them, uttered this awful imprecation, "God damn my soul, for Christ's sake!" The good man, shocked with hearing such blasphemous language, went up to him, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the man, said to him with peculiar mildness and solemnity, "Friend, God has already done much for Christ's sake: suppose He should do that too, what would become of you?" It was a word in season, and it came with power. The conscience of the soldier sunk under the reproof. He was led not only to reform the evil habit of swearing, to which he had long been addicted, but to reflect on his ways, and to turn to the Lord. He became a real Christian; and proved the soundness of his conversion by maintaining to the end of his life a conversation becoming the Gospel.[d]

v. 8. *R. W. Dibdin,* 159.

d *Whitecross.*

9. yet wiser, bec. he will wisely use the instructions.[a]

The wise man made wiser by instruction (v. 9).—I. Take a more accurate view of the wise man, and inquire who it is that may be taken for such. 1. He proposes some end, and pursues it rationally; 2. A good man; 3. Moral goodness the end he has in view. II. The text supposes that instruction may be given even to a wise man for his advantage. 1. No truly wise man will account it impossible to increase his wisdom; 2. He will wish it to be increased; 3. He will account himself happy to have instruction from any source. III. That when instruction is given to a wise man he will yet be wiser; for he will—1. Endeavour to find out the motives of the person giving it; 2. He will consider the tendency of the instruction given; 3. He will pray that he may see what is most valuable.[b]

a "The more a wise man learns the more he loves wisdom."—*Fausset.*
"Here is distinguished the wisdom brought into habit, and that wh. is but verbal, and swimming only in conceit; for the one upon the occasion presented is quickened and redoubled, the other is amazed and confused."—*Lord Bacon.*

A powerful sermon.—It is related of Dr. Manton, that having to preach before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, he chose a subject in which he had an opportunity of displaying his learning and judgment. He was heard with admiration and applause by the intelligent part of his audience; but as he was returning from dinner with the Lord Mayor, a poor man following him pulled him by the sleeve of his gown, and asked him if he was the gentleman that preached before the Lord Mayor. He replied he was. "Sir," said he, "I came with hopes of getting some good to my soul, but I was greatly disappointed, for I could not understand a great deal of what you said; you were quite above my comprehension." "Friend," said the doctor, "if I

b *Iota* in 400 Sks. *v. 9. M. A. Meilan,* ii. 73.
"The sea does not contain all the pearls, the earth does not contain all the treasures, and the flint-stone does not contain all the diamonds, since the head of man

have not given you a sermon, you have given me one. By the grace of God, I will not play the fool in such a manner again."[c] —*Improvement of time.*—While my body is dressing, not with an effeminate curiosity, nor yet with rude neglect, my mind addresses itself to her ensuing task, bethinking what is to be done, and in what order, and marshalling (as it may) my hours with my work. That done, after some while's meditation, I walk up to my masters and companions, my books: and sitting down amongst them with the best contentment, I dare not reach forth my hand to salute any of them till I have first looked up to heaven, and craved favour of Him to whom all my studies are duly referred; without whom I can neither profit nor labour. After this, out of no great variety I call forth those which may best fit my occasions, wherein I am not too scrupulous of age. Sometimes I put myself to school to one of those ancients whom the Church hath honoured with the name of Fathers, whose volumes I confess not to open without a secret reverence of their holiness and gravity; sometimes to those later doctors, who want nothing but age to make them classical; always to God's Book. That day is lost whereof some hours are not improved in those divine monuments: others I turn over out of choice, these out of duty. Ere I can have sate unto weariness, my family, having now overcome all household distractions, invite me to our common devotions, not without some short preparation. These, heartily performed, send me up with a more strong and cheerful appetite to my former work, which I find made easy to me by intermission and variety. Now, therefore, can I deceive the hours with change of pleasures—that is, of labours. One while my eyes are busied, another while my hand, and sometimes my mind takes the burden from them both. One hour is spent in textual divinity, another in controversy; histories relieve them both. Now, when my mind is weary of others' labours, it begins to undertake its own: sometimes it meditates, and winds up for future use; sometimes it lays forth its conceits into present discourse, sometimes for itself, often for others. Neither know I whether it works or plays in these thoughts; I am sure no sport hath more pleasure, no work more use. Only the decay of a weak body makes me think these delights insensibly laborious. Thus could I all day (as ringers use) make myself music with changes, were it not that this faint monitor interrupts me still in the midst of my busy pleasures and enforces me both to respite and repast. I must yield to both; while my body and mind are joined together in these unequal couples, the better must follow the weaker. Before my meals, therefore, and after, I let myself loose from all thoughts, and now would forget that I ever studied. A full mind takes away the body's appetite, no less than a full body makes a dull and unwieldy mind..... After my later meal my thoughts are slight: only my memory may be charged with her task of recalling what was committed to her custody in the day; and my heart is busy in examining my hands and mouth, and all other senses, of that day's behaviour. And now the evening is come, no tradesman doth more carefully take in his wares, clear his shop-board, and shut his windows, than I would shut up my thoughts and clear my mind. That student shall live miserably who, like a camel, lies down under his burden. All this done, calling together my family, we end the day with God.[d]

encloses wisdom."—*Saadi.*

[c] *R. T. S.*

"Wisdom's self oft seeks to sweet retired solitude; where, with her best nurse, Contemplation, she plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings, that in the various bustle of resort were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd."—*Milton.*

"It is by the individual effort of many combined, that all mighty works of man are accomplished — building great ships, constructing vast machines, levelling or tunnelling rocky mountains, bridging rivers and chasms, etc. It is by the individual working of the wheels of a watch or clock that it tells the hour of the day. It is by the individual revolution of the various wheels, each in its proper place, of the great iron works of our country that so much material is produced and wealth acquired. Upon this particular, illustrations abound in every part of nature and of art."—*John Bate.*

[d] *Bp. Hall*

"Seldom ever was any knowledge given to keep, but to impart: the grace of this rich jewel is lost in concealment."—*Bishop Hall.*

10, 11. (10) fear, *etc.*, ch. i. 7; Eccl. xii. 13. of the holy, a plural epithet in apposition with Jehovah.[a] (11) days, *etc.*, ch. iii. 16, x. 27.

Character (*vv.* 10—12).—Nothing so important to man as character. Here we have—I. The foundation and blessedness of a good character. 1. The foundation; 2. The blessedness. II. The solemn personality of character, whether good or bad.[b]

A remarkable character.—During the session of Congress, Mr. Jefferson pointed out Roger Sherman to a friend, saying, "That is Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, a man who never said a foolish thing in his life." Mr. Macon said of him, "He had more common sense than any man I ever knew." Fisher Ames said, "If I am absent during a discussion of a subject, and consequently know not on which side to vote, I always look at Roger Sherman; for I am sure if I vote with him, I shall vote right." He was a pious man, faithful in his closet, in his family, on the bench, and in the senate house. Such character is valuable as it is rare.

12. wise for thyself, wisdom will bring its own reward, as also will folly.[a] "This verse asserts the great law of personal retribution. Whatever thou doest, thou, and none other, shall reap the fruits of it."[b]

Carving character.—Did you ever watch a sculptor slowly fashioning a human countenance? It is not moulded at once. It is not struck out at a single blow. It is painfully and laboriously wrought. A thousand blows rough-cast it. Ten thousand chisels polish and perfect it, put in the fine touches, and bring out the features and expression. It is a work of time; but at last the full likeness comes out, and stands fixed and unchanging in the solid marble. So does a man carve out his own moral likeness. Every day he adds something to the work. A thousand acts of thought and will and effort shape the features and expressions of the soul. Habits of love, piety, and truth, habits of falsehood, passion, or goodness, silently mould and fashion it, till at length it wears the likeness of God, or the image of a demon.[c]

13—15. (13) foolish woman, representing the sensuous, self-indulgent life. *Comp.* ch. vii. simple, in the bad sense. knowing nothing, and caring to know nothing. Self-indulgence ruins intelligence, and plucks away all care for wisdom. (14) high places, or conspicuous places. (15) go right on, if so be she may induce them to turn aside from duty to indulgence.

The ministry of temptation (*vv.* 13—18).—I. As conducted by depraved woman. 1. She is ignorant; 2. She is clamorous; 3. She is audacious; 4. She is persuasive. II. As directed to the inexperienced in life. 1. All men are passengers; 2. Temptation is busy in the path of each. III. As tending to a most miserable destination. 1. This woman obtaineth guests; 2. They are ruined; 3 Ruined contrary to their intention.[a]

The voice of woman.—There is one part of woman's education often forgotten or neglected—the culture and formation of a gentle voice. It is a great gift of nature to be aided by culture—an instrument of powerful influence for good. I speak not of singing hymns now, and of culture for harmony and musical

a "The knowledge of the holy, in whatsoever of God or creature, it may have an example or be made to appear." —*J. Miller.*

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 10. *P. Pyle*, ii. 193; *Dr. J. Hunt*, ii. 273; *Dr. W. Sherlock*, ii. 25; *Abp. Secker*, iii. 1; *Bp. Sherlock*, iii. 52; *P. H. Maty*, iii. 17; *C. Girdleston*, iii. 171.

a Comp. Job xxii. 2, 3, xxxv. 6–9; Ro. xi. 35; Re. xxii. 11, 12.

"Every man has in himself a continent of undiscovered character. Happy is he who acts the Columbus to his own soul."—*Sir J. Stevens.*

b Spk. Com.

Ga. vi. 6.

c Oxenden.

a Dr. Thomas.

" 'Tis thine to curb the passions' madd'ning sway, and wipe the mourner's bitter tear away: 'tis thine to soothe, when hope itself has fled, and cheer with angel smile the sufferer's bed: to give to earth its charm, to life its zest, one only task — to bless, and to be blest." —*Graham.*

"Most females will forgive a liberty rather than a slight:

purposes, though these tend to God's praise, or to give innocent amusement: but this gentle voice will be able to guide and persuade to good the manly heart of a faithful husband, will mitigate sorrow, lessen trial, and speak of hope and joy to her dearest friends and connections, in accents at once powerful and pleasing. Let us then be careful in our schools to cultivate this most valuable acquirement. How different, in all respects, for a family, for friends and neighbours, are the kind, gentle, persuasive accents I have described from sounds we sometimes (alas! too often) hear in the close abodes of poverty and trial—high, harsh, female treble tones of bitter import, scolding and reproaching, and driving away from the hearth and home (perhaps to sorrow and to sin) the husband and the children.[b]

16—18. (16) **simple**, *etc.*, obs. the foolish woman's imitation of the call of wisdom, *v.* 4. (17) **stolen waters**, *etc.*, pleasures are attractive bec. they are forbidden.[a] (18) **depths of hell**, Sheol. "Behind the scene of voluptuousness is seen the world of the dead. The spectres of past transgressions haunt it."[b]

The pleasures of prohibited sin (*v.* 17).—This argues not only a bold contempt but an impudent defiance—I. Of God's law—in that the waters are sweeter for being stolen. II. Of God's curse. The bread is eaten in secret for fear of discovery and punishment; and the sinner takes a pride in having so far baffled his convictions and triumphed over them, that, notwithstanding that fear, he dares commit sin, and can make himself believe that being eaten in secret it shall never be discovered or reckoned, for sweetness and pleasantness is the bait; but by the tempter's own showing, even that is so absurd, and hath such alloys, that it is a wonder how it can have any influence upon men that pretend to reason.[c]

Queen's influence on the female character of Britain.—The unsullied purity of Her Majesty's private life, and the noble example she afforded to the women of Great Britain, was attended with an effect, the benefit of which was deeply felt through the whole of her reign, and may, as we trust it will, extend to ages yet unborn, since upon the conduct of the female sex mainly rests the edifice of the public as well as private morals. No woman, however elevated her rank or powerful her connections, if her reputation was known to have suffered the slightest taint, was permitted to appear in the presence of Her Majesty. Her fine reply to Lady ———, when soliciting permission to present Lady ———, and, when refused, saying she did not know what to tell her disappointed friend, will long be remembered and repeated: "Tell her," said the queen, "you did not dare to ask me."[d]

and if any woman were to hang a man for stealing her picture, although it were set in gold, it would be a new case in law; but if he carried off the setting, and left the portrait, I would not answer for his safety."—*Colton.*

b Slaney.

a Ro. vii. 7.

"A proverb, meaning that forbidden delights are sweet and pleasant, as fruits of risk and danger."—*Fausset.*

b Syk. Com.

Comp. Pr. ii. 18, 19, vii. 27.

vv. 17, 18. *T. Adams*, 157.

c M. Henry.

"It is a great mistake to suppose that a woman with no heart will be an easy creditor in the exchange of affection. There is not on earth a more merciless exacter of love from others than a thoroughly selfish woman; and the more unlovely she grows, the more jealously and scrupulously she exacts love to the utmost farthing."—*Mrs. Stowe.*

d Percy Anec.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1. **proverbs**, or collection of maxims; without any necessary connection. The two sentences composing one verse are often antithetical. **wise son**, one who is godly, ready to receive parental guidance, and the higher instructions of Divine Wisdom. **foolish son**, one who is wilful, only seeking sensual indulgences. **mother**, mentioned with no special purpose, only to vary the sentence from the previous one.[a]

a Some writers, however, see some point in this reference to the mother, *e.g.*, "Here is distinguished that fathers have most comfort of the

good proof of their sons; but the mothers have most discomfort of their ill proof, because women have little discerning of virtue but of fortune." —*Lord Bacon.*

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 1. *S. Ogden*, 231.

"Aversion from reproof is not wise. It is a mark of a little mind. A great man can afford to lose; a little insignificant fellow is afraid of being snuffed out."—*Cecil.*

A Polish prince was accustomed to carry the picture of his father always in his bosom; and on any particular occasion he would take it out and view it, and say, "Let me do nothing unbecoming so excellent a father."

"What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence, which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your own thoughts and feelings! What care, what caution, would you exercise in the selection! Now, this is what God has done. He has placed before you the immortal minds of your children, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you are about to inscribe every day and every hour, by your instructions, by your

The child and the parent (*v.* 1).—I. The holy character of the child gladdens the heart of the parent—1. Because he sees in such conduct the best results of such training: 2. And the best guarantees for his son's happiness. II. The unholy character of the child saddens the heart of the parent.[b]

Reproofs from Dr. Waugh.—At one of the half-yearly examinations at the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School, at Mill Hill, the head master informed the examiners that he had been exceedingly tried by the misconduct and perverseness of a boy who had done something very wrong: and who, though he acknowledged the fact, could not be brought to acknowledge the magnitude of the offence. The examiners were requested to expostulate with the boy, and try if he could be brought to feel and deplore it. Dr. Waugh was solicited to undertake the task, and the boy was, in consequence, brought before him. "How long have you been in the school, my boy?" asked the doctor. "Four months, sir." "When did you hear from your father last?" "My father's dead, sir." "Ay! alas the day! 'tis a great loss, a great loss, that of a father. But God can make it up to you, by giving you a tender, affectionate mother." On this the boy, who had previously seemed as hard as a flint, began to soften. The doctor proceeded: "Well, laddie, where is your mother?" "On her voyage home from India, sir." "Ay! good news for you, my boy: do you love your mother?" "Yes, sir." "And do you expect to see her soon?" "Yes, sir." "Do you think she loves you?" "Yes, sir, I am sure of it." "Then think, my dear laddie, think of her feelings when she comes here and finds that, instead of your being in favour with every one, you are in such deep disgrace as to run the risk of expulsion, and yet are too hardened to acknowledge that you have done wrong. Winna ye break your poor mother's heart, think ye? Just think o' that, my lad." The poor culprit burst into a flood of tears, acknowledged his fault, and promised amendment.—*Collateral benefits of Sunday schools.*—From the Stalybridge Sunday-School Union Report of 1847 we transcribe an affecting incident:—"The father of one of our scholars was a drunkard, dog-fighter, etc., spent his Sabbaths in public-houses with bad company, singing profane songs, taking God's name in vain, and he frequently went home, beat his wife, and turned her and the children out of doors; yet, amid all this, the mother was anxious to keep the children at the Sunday school; the eldest boy was very attentive, and at home obedient; the good he received from his teacher being reduced to practice, the father began to take knowledge of his dutiful son. The superintendent having requested the scholars to invite their parents and friends who went to no place of worship to come to the evening service, this boy invited his parents, but did not succeed the first time. On Sunday following he again invited them to go with him to the house of God; both father and mother went with him, to the astonishment of all who observed it. The father attended several Sundays in succession, and remarked that the preacher was preaching to him particularly. Subsequently a few friends met at his house for prayer and conversation; he began to sorrow for sin, and also to be anxious to sit with the children in the Sunday school; the superintendent, to encourage him, put him to teach a class, and a reading and spelling book were given him

for his improvement at home during the week. Every Sunday morning he is now found in his class, with his little flock around him, teaching with all the earnestness and simplicity possible. His son has been added to the church, two religious services are held weekly in his house, and he and his wife are to be received into church fellowship shortly. But this is not all; the neighbourhood in which he lives had been proverbial for its wickedness; three families who had neglected divine worship are, through the instrumentality of this family, in regular attendance upon the means of grace."

spirit, or by your example, something which will remain, and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment-day."—*Dr. Payson.*

2. **treasures of wickedness**, ill-gotten gains, *see* ch. xi. 4. There may be intended a comparison between the relative values of wealth and of character. **righteousness**, including generally good character, and specifically *benevolence*. **death**, the real sting of wh. is the sense of sin.[a]

Wealth and character (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. The worthlessness of a wicked man's wealth. It does not profit him—1. In the way of making him truly happy: 2. In obtaining the true love of his fellow men; 3. In the dying hour or in the future world. II. The value of a righteous man's character.[b]

David Hume.—Hume, the historian, received a religious education from his mother, and early in life was the subject of strong and hopeful religious impressions; but as he approached manhood they were effaced, and confirmed infidelity succeeded. Maternal partiality, however alarmed at first, came at length to look with less and less pain upon his declension, and filial love and reverence seemed to have been absorbed in the pride of philosophical scepticism; for Hume applied himself with unwearied, and, unhappily, with successful efforts, to sap the foundation of his mother's faith. Having succeeded in this dreadful work, he went abroad, and as he was returning, an express met him in London, with a letter from his mother, informing him that she was in a deep decline, and could not long survive: she said, she found herself without any support in her distress; that he had taken away that only source of comfort upon which, in all cases of affliction, she used to rely: and that she now found her mind sinking into despair. She did not doubt that her son would afford her some substitute for her religion; and she conjured him to hasten to her, or at least to send her a letter, containing such consolations as philosophy could afford to a dying mortal. Hume was overwhelmed with anguish on receiving this letter, and hastened to Scotland, travelling day and night; but before he arrived his mother expired. No permanent impression seems, however, to have been made on his mind by this trying event; and, whatever remorse he might have felt at the moment, he soon relapsed into his previous hardness of heart. Thus it is, that false philosophy restores the sting to death, and gives again the victory to the grave.[c]

a "The highest opulence of the dead sinner is of no possible profit; but the righteousness of the saved sinner, even without any opulence at all, is a fortune; for, like the 'charm of the lamp,' it makes for him everlasting blessedness."—*J. Miller.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 2. *W. H. Starr*, 183.

Unsullied poverty is always happy; while impure wealth brings with it many sorrows.

Reputation is rarely proportioned to virtue.

"We have seen a thousand people esteemed either for the merit they had not yet attained, or for that they no longer possessed."—*St. Evremond.*

c *R. T. S.*

3, 4. (3) **soul**, put for life: *comp.* Ps. xxxvii. 25. **casteth**, *etc.*, better read, "He will repel the greedy desires of the wicked." The godly man may be sure of not wanting "any good thing;" but for him to desire and press for riches would be to fail in the true submission and dependence on God. (4) **slack hand**, evidently careless, idle, indifferent. The hand of one who does not feel the burden and responsibility of life.[a] **diligent**, lit. *sharpened.*[b]

a The word used lit. means *deceitful*, in the sense of failing of its purpose.

b Pr. xii. 24.

"What is indus-

try? It doth not consist merely in action, for that is incessant in all persons. Our mind being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, gets tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation some whither: but the direction of our mind to some good end without roving, or thinking in a straight and steady course, and drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry."—*Quoted by D. Thomas, D.D.*

v. 4. *A. Gray*, 463; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii 262; *R. Warner*, ii. 361.

"Is not the field, with lively culture green, a sight more joyous than the dead morass? Do not the skies, with active ether clean, and fann'd by sprightly zephyrs, far surpass the foul November fogs and slumbrous mass with which sad Nature veils her drooping face? Does not the mountain stream, as clear as glass, gay-dancing on, the putrid pool disgrace? The same in all holds true, but chief in human race."—*Thomson.*

"Never compare thyself with those that are below thee in what is worthy or eminent, but with those that are above thyself. . . . Compare thy-

Industry and contentment.—A noble instance of contentment is given in the life of the late William Roscoe, Esq. That gifted man was almost entirely self-taught, and indebted to his own efforts for his rise from a very humble station, his father having been the master of a public-house, with gardens and a bowling-green, at Liverpool. Mr. Roscoe afterwards represented this, his native town, in Parliament, was universally respected, and became distinguished as the author of the *Life of Pope Leo X.*, and of the *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*. In an account of his early days, written by himself, he says: "Having quitted school at twelve years old, I now began to assist my father in his agricultural concerns, particularly in his business of cultivating potatoes for sale, of which he every year grew several acres, and which he sold, when produced early in the season, at very advanced prices. His mode of cultivation was entirely by the spade; and when raised early they were considered in that part of Lancashire as a favourite esculent. When they had attained their proper growth, we were accustomed to carry them to the market on our heads, in large baskets, for sale, where I was generally entrusted with the disposal of them, and soon became a very useful assistant to my father. In this and other laborious occupations, particularly in the care of a garden, in which I took great pleasure, I passed several years of my life, devoting my hours of relaxation to reading my books. This mode of life gave health and vigour to my body, and amusement and instruction to my mind; and to this day I well remember the delicious sleep which succeeded my labours, from which I was again called at an early hour. If I were asked whom I considered to be the happiest of the human race, I would answer, those who cultivate the earth by their own hands."—*Advantages of industry.*—The blessing of God doth so follow it, that more have been made honourable by their diligence than by their birth. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," saith Solomon; and in another place, "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat;" and elsewhere, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule." From servants many have grown to be masters, from hirelings to be officers, through their diligence—as we see in Jacob, Joseph, David, with many more. Witness also the Romans, who raised their commonwealth thereby, and stood not upon terms of blood; some of them were fetched from the plough; some from other places mean and base. Cicero, Fabius, Quintius, and others, witness these things. Justinius, of a diligent herdboy became a diligent soldier: of a diligent soldier, a great commander; of a commander, the emperor of the world, and one of the best. The kings of Hungary were derived from Lechus the Second, who was a husbandman, in remembrance whereof he caused his wooden soles or shoes to be reserved in his castle, for all posterity to remember how and in what sort he first came into court. And if we should come nearer home, how many judges and bishops of this land, of mean descent, have risen to honour by it! . . . Oh, then, let us fall in love with diligence! Which way can we cast our eyes and want arguments? Look up to heaven, and without diligence no getting thither; for that crown we must run, and strive, and work. Look down to hell, and without diligence no escaping that; prayers and tears must help to quench those flames. Look upon the earth, and without diligence no blessing can be hoped

for from it. God speed the plough! let the land miss his tillage, and where is the increase? but the oftener it is turned, compassed, and ploughed, the surer it proves to the husbandman's content. We read in story of one Furius Cresinus, a Roman, who was accused of witchcraft in drawing away the fat of other men's land into his own, for that every year he had great crops, and his neighbours small or none; this they thought came by enchantment, and thereof he was questioned in judgment. The poor man brings with him all his tools of husbandry—heavy mattocks, weighty ploughshares, full-fed oxen, all his irons much bigger and stronger than his neighbours', and, lastly, his daughter, a strong and big maid, who was his helper in his business, and setting all these before his judges and accusers, cried out in these words, "*Hæc sunt, Quirites, veneficia mea!*" "This daughter, these oxen, these tools, are the instruments of my witchcraft, and besides these I use none, and these with diligence I apply." This is the way to have great and good crops both of grain and grace, if thou lay thy hand with diligence to the plough, and have fitting instruments. But withal, ever with the ploughman be looking up upon the sun; and with the pilot, who, as he holdeth his hand upon the stern, hath his eye upon the star. For it is good ground, a good husbandman, and God's blessing, that bring good crops, whether for soul or body.[c]

5. **gathereth**, the ripened harvest into threshing-floor or barn. **son**, or man. Son may be especially used bec. these proverbs and counsels are addressed to the young. The wise son watches for opportunities, and does the work of the season. **sleepeth**, in mere listless idleness, or for mere enjoyment.[a] "Life is a short day, but it is a working day."

The day of grace (*v.* 5).—It is—I. A short time, and therefore calls for diligence. The King's business requires haste. II. A limited time, beyond which there is no mercy, Eccles. ix. 10; Luke xiii. 9. III. A varying time, as summer days are longer than winter days, and there are sunny days and cloudy days; but the rainbow of God's mercy is seen only in the day of grace. We should look for it in vain in the night of eternal darkness.[b]

Dr. Franklin.—Dr. Franklin, in his *Memoirs*, mentions a merchant, named Denham, who failed in his business at Bristol, compounded with his creditors, and went to America. In a few years he accumulated a plentiful fortune, returned to England in the same ship with Franklin, called his creditors together to an entertainment, and paid the full remainder of his debts, with interest up to the time of settlement.[c]

6, 7. (6) **blessings**, praises and thanks. Benedictions. **violence**, *etc.*, may be read, "The mouth of the wicked covereth, or concealeth violence."[a] The idea, however, may be, His detected and exposed iniquity shall be like a muzzle on his mouth. He shall be struck speechless. (7) **is blessed**, for a blessing, as an excellent and inspiring example. **rot**, be worm-eaten, useless. He can only be used to point a warning.[b]

The memory of the just (*v.* 7).—What multitudes have passed away; in what different lights are the human beings of the past presented to our thoughts; how odious are some, but of the just their memory is blessed. I. Self-evidently so, for the mind blesses it, reverts to it with complacency. II. They are practical

self with those that are more learned or wise than thyself, and then thou wilt see matter to keep thee humble. . . . The most of the learning that this age glories of, is but an extract or collection of what we find in those men of greater parts; only we think we have done great matters if we digest it into some other method, and put in here and there a small pittance of our own, or quarrel at something that the ancients delivered in some odd particulars."—*Sir M. Hale.*

c Arrowsmith.

a "To sleep when the plenteous harvest lies ready for the sickle is the extremest sloth."—*Spk. Com.* "He who gets knowledge and wisdom in the days of his youth gathers in summer, and he will have the comfort and credit of his industry; but he who idles away the days of his youth will bear the shame of his indolence when he is old."—*Matt. Henry.*

b S. G. Bowes, M.A.

c Whitecross.

a "The violence wh. the wicked has done is as a bandage over his mouth, reducing him to a silence and shame like that of the leper or the condemned criminal, whose 'face is covered.'"—*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. ix. 5, 6.

illustrations, verifying examples of the excellence of true religion. III. We regard them as diminishing to our view the repulsiveness and horror of death. IV. As combined with the whole progress of the cause of God on earth. Apply:—1. Is it not a reasonable object of Christian desire to leave a memory that shall be blessed? 2. While the best are in course of time forgotten by men, their everlasting remembrance is with God.[c]

The power of kindness.—Fénélon was a Roman Catholic, and Archbishop of Cambray, in France. He was a man of the finest feelings, of the greatest benevolence, and he uniformly practised the law, "overcome evil with good." He was kind and affable to the lowly, mild and courteous to the ignorant, philanthropic to the miserable, and ever gentle both to friend and foe. The consequence was that he won all hearts. His diocese was often the theatre of war; but the English, Germans, and Dutch even surpassed the inhabitants of Cambray in their love and veneration for him. At such times he gathered the wretched into his residence and entertained them: for his known goodness had surrounded him with a power which even contending armies could not resist; and the consequence was that his dwellings were safe, even when towns and villages were lying in smoking ruins around him. The following is an instance of his great kindness:—He observed one day that a peasant, who had been driven from his home, and to whom Fénélon had given shelter, ate nothing. He inquired the reason. "Alas! my lord," said the poor man, "in making my escape from my cottage I had not time to bring off my cow, which was the support of my family. The enemy will drive her away, and I shall never find another so good." Fénélon, availing himself of his privilege of safe conduct, immediately set out, accompanied by a single servant, and drove her back himself to the peasant. By thus walking according to the law of overcoming evil with good, he gained the affection of all. The peasantry loved him as their father; and, long after his death, their tears would flow when they said, "There is the chair on which our good archbishop used to sit in the midst of us: we shall see him no more." What a crown of unfading glory the law of love gave him![d]

8—10. (8) receive, *etc.*, be willing to submit to rules. prating fool, lit. *fool of lips*, a braggart. shall fall, be brought to a humiliating downfall: or shall be beaten. (9) walketh surely, or securely, safely. perverteth, acteth deceitfully. known, found out and punished.[a] (10) worketh, ch. vi. 13. "In craft and malice behind a man's back."[b]

The upright (*v.* 9).—I. Observe a few paradoxes. 1. He who walks uprightly is he who leans upon God; 2. Who bears his own burden; 3. Who ever bows before God; 4. Who waits for God; 5. Who runs in the way of God's commandments. II. Call to mind a few truisms. 1. He never walks alone; 2. He is always safe; 3. He is comparatively free from alarm; 4. He is never neglected; 5. He is not disappointed at last. III. A few questions. 1. Is your heart changed? 2. Do you avoid all known sin? 3. Do you seek the approval of God? 4. Do you continually endeavour to do the right?[c]

A rule for talkers.—No one who wishes that conversation should be pleasant to his neighbours as well as himself should speak more than two or three sentences at once. However much

Abp. Secker, vii. 397; *J. Foster*, ii. 220.

c J. Foster.

"One man has kindness deep within him; and when the occasion comes the rind or shell is cracked, and the kernel is found. Such a man's heart, too long clouded, like a sun in a storm-muffled day, shoots through some opening rift, and glows for a period in glory. But there are other natures that are always cloudless. With them a cloud is the exception, shining is the rule."—*Beecher.*

"I pray you very solemnly to put that idea of knowing all things in heaven and earth out of your heads. It is very little that we can ever know, either of the ways of Providence or the laws of existence. But that little is enough, and exactly enough."—*Ruskin.*

d Montgomery.

a "He adopts crooked ways in order, as he thinks, to be able to practise iniquity more secure and unobserved; but he is ever known and exposed, he must himself always fear recognition, and this gives to his walk 'insecurity.'"—*Rucetschi, thro' Lange.*

b Wordsworth.

c Stems and Twigs.

he may have to say, it will be all the more agreeably said for giving others the opportunity of assenting, illustrating, qualifying, or even contradicting. The ball needs to be returned by the opposite player to make a lively game.[d]

11. well of life, or fresh flowing spring, ever pouring forth healing, helpful words, Jer. ii. 13, xvii. 13 ; Pro. iv. 10. violence, *etc.*, see *v.* 6.

The speech of the good (*v.* 11).—Speech is one of the most distinguishing faculties of man : here that of a good man is compared to a well of life. I. It is natural. II. Clean. III. Refreshing. IV. Life-giving.[a]

Mr. Hervey and Dr. Doddridge.—Mr. Hervey, in a letter, says : "I have lately seen that most excellent minister of the ever-blessed Jesus, Mr. ——. I dined, supped, and spent the evening with him at Northampton, in company with Dr. Doddridge, and two pious ingenuous clergymen of the Church of England, both of them known to the learned world by their valuable writings ; and surely I never spent a more delightful evening, or saw one that seemed to make nearer approaches to the felicity of heaven. A gentleman of great worth and rank in the town invited us to his house, and gave us an elegant treat ; but how mean was his provision, how coarse his delicacies, compared with the fruit of my friend's lips !—they dropped as the honeycomb, and were a well of life."

12. hatred . . strifes, litigations, disputes, either family or social. love, one element of wh. is the Pauline charity, wh. "beareth all things, and seeketh not her own."[a] covereth, "by ignoring them, by palliating words, by considerate and conciliatory demeanour."[b]

Hatred and love (*v.* 12).—Here we have—I. The great mischief-maker—hatred. Consider the strifes it causes in nations, communities, families. II. The great peace-maker—love. It is an element ; its home is the heart of God—the God of peace. It is an agent ; its grand messenger is Christ—the Prince of peace. 1. It restores order ; 2. It pardons offences.[c]

Speaking gently.—

Speak gently ! It is better far
To rule by love than fear ;
Speak gently—let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here !

Speak gently ! Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind ;
And gently Friendship's accents flow—
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child !
Its love be sure to gain ;
Teach it in accents soft and mild :
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear—
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care !

d *Blackwood's Mag.*

a *Dr. Thomas.*

"Such as thy words are such will thy affections be esteemed ; and such will thy deeds as thy affections, and such thy life as thy deeds."—*Socrates.*

"Great men's words, saith one, are like dead men's shoes ; he may go barefoot that waiteth for them."—*J. Trapp.*

a 1 Cor. xiii.

b *O. Zöckler.*

"Love hath a large mantle."—*Trapp.*

Pr. xvii. 9 ; Jas. v. 20 ; 1 Pe. iv. 8 ; 1 Cor xiii. 4.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

"Speech is too often not, as the Frenchman defined it, the art of concealing thought, but of quite stifling and suspending thought, so that there is none to conceal."—*Carlyle.*

"When you speak to any, especially of quality, look them full in the face, other gestures betraying want of breeding, confidence, or honesty ; dejected eye confessing, to most judgments, guilt or folly."—*F. Osborn.*

"In the use of the

tongue God hath distinguished us from beasts, and by the well or ill using it we are distinguished from one another; and, therefore, though silence be innocent as death, harmless as a rose's breath to a distant passenger, yet it is rather the state of death than life."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"He that is graceless in a day of grace will be speechless in a day of judgment."—*Mead.*

d Bates.

Speak gently to the aged one,
Grieve not the careworn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run—
Let each in peace depart!

Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word!

Speak gently to the erring: know,
They may have toil'd in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so:
Oh, win them back again!

Speak gently! He who gave His life
To bend man's stubborn will,
When elements were in fierce strife,
Said to them, "Peace, be still!"

Speak gently! 'Tis a little thing
Dropp'd in the heart's deep well.
The good, the joy, which it may bring,
Eternity shall tell.[d]

13, 14. (13) **lips**, or spoken words. **rod**, *etc.*, punishment like that wh. comes to the idle and foolish schoolboy.[a] **void**, *etc.*, wh. is surely seen by his foolish talk. (14) **lay up**, store it in memory and in heart; and is cautious in displaying it. **mouth . . foolish**, who tell out all they know, speedily reveal their emptiness, and pluck away all confidence that may have been felt in them.[b]

Contrasts (*v.* 13).—Here is—I. An intellectual contrast. The intelligent man—1. Communicates wisdom; 2. Accumulates wisdom. Compare this with the ignorant man. II. A social contrast. III. A moral contrast.[c]

Speaking and singing.—Little or no attention is paid to the tone in which children speak, consequently they too often contract bad habits of intonation from the earliest age; and as they grow up what is mere habitual tone is mistaken for their natural voice. From this inattention to intonation in early years proceeds much difficulty in the voice for singing; and it is not unfrequently the cause of diseases of the throat and chest. It is but a part of this evil system that a most injurious habit prevails among the young ladies of the present day of speaking in a subdued muffled tone, or what might be called a semi-falsetto, in consequence of which very few natural voices are heard. It must be understood, I speak more particularly of English ladies, as foreigners generally speak in the natural tone of their voice. I have no hesitation in saying that hundreds of young ladies bring upon themselves serious chest-affections from a bad habit of speaking and singing.[d]

15. **rich man**, in harmony with the whole teaching, this must mean the wealth of the *good* rich man: not any mere accumulation of money. **poverty**, wh. exposes them to the power of every national calamity. The poor are always the first to feel depressions of trade, disease, or famine.[a]

The money power (*v.* 15).—Here is a description of what is,

a Egyptian proverb—"A youth has a back that he may attend to his teacher."

b The greatest talkers have always the least to say.

c Dr. Thomas.

"The tongue of the fool is the key of his counsel, which in a wise man wisdom hath in keeping."—*Socrates.*

"Words are often everywhere as the minute hands of the soul, more important than even the hour-hands of actions."—*Richter.*

d Signora Ferrari.

a "The facts of human society are not ignored. Below the surface of this *v.* there perhaps lies a grave irony. The rich

rather than a prescription of what ought to be. It is an interesting fact that the Jews wield this power in a greater degree than any other people. Over against this power stands the counterpart—weakness. A large proportion of the penniless are in a greater or less degree reckless.[b]

Rich for a moment.—The British ship *Britannia* was wrecked off the coast of Brazil, and had on board a large consignment of Spanish dollars. In the hope of saving some of them, a number of barrels were brought on deck, but the vessel went to pieces so fast that the only hope for life was by taking at once to the boats. The last boat was about to push off, when a young midshipman went back to see if any one was still on board. To his surprise there sat a man on deck with a hatchet in his hand, with which he had broken open several of the casks, the contents of which he was now heaping up about him. "What are you doing there?" shouted the youth. "Don't you know the ship is fast going to pieces?" "The ship may go," said the man; "I have lived a poor wretch all my life, and I am determined to die rich." His remonstrances were answered only by another flourish of the hatchet, and he was left to his fate.

16, 17. (16) labour, his earnings, acquisitions.[a] The Heb. word includes the result as well as the process of labour. to life,[b] put for all success and blessing (ch. xi. 19). fruit, better, *profit*. to sin, his successes encourage him to further acts and designs of self-will.[c] Some trans. this *to expiation*,[d] i.e. they are all demanded by justice, and are all consumed for the expiation of his sins. (17) way, *etc.*, better read, "A way to life is he who heedeth correction:" *i.e.* such a man guides others to life. His example is efficacious. erreth, better as marg. *causeth to err*, puts others astray.

The niggardliness of increasing wealth.—A young man was in the receipt of a decent salary in some merchant's office—just enough to provide him with every comfort and some luxuries, but nothing to spare "worth saving," as we say. He was liberal to the full measure of his ability, and brought out his guinea to religious and benevolent objects as freely as any. He had a bequest from a distant relative (some three or four thousand pounds, I believe) suddenly left him. Now, mark the sequel, and see what a fool human nature can make of itself. My informant tells me that a gentleman who had been in the habit of receiving this man's annual contribution to some philanthropic society, congratulated himself that on his next visit to the happy legatee he should probably get "first-fruits," "thank-offerings," besides the annual guinea. A few months after the bequest he called, and, to his surprise, found the metamorphosed man would not give him a farthing. No representations of the astonished visitor could make the slightest impression. At last he said, "Why, Mr. ———, you always used to be most liberal, and I cannot account for your present mood at all. I thought that having, as I hear, come in for a considerable legacy, you would probably have doubled your subscription." "That," said the unhappy man, "is the very reason why I can give you nothing. While I was in receipt merely of my salary I could save nothing, but now that I have a larger sum, which I am not compelled to touch, and which will go on accumulating, every little I can add to it will tell." And from this he could not be beaten off.

man, trusting in his riches, is tempted to make them his strong city—to have no other tower of strength. Comp. Pr. xviii. 11."—*Spk. Com.*

b Dr. Arnot.

r. 15. *Dr. J. Langhorne*, i. 204.

"Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long."—*Goldsmith.*

a 2 Jno. 8.

b "According to the constitution of things righteous labour tends to life, bodily, mental, and spiritual: the life of self, and the life of others."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.* c 1 Tim. vi. 10; Ro. vi. 21.

d Hitzig.

"When a miser contents himself with giving nothing, and saving what he has got, and is in other respects guilty of no injustice, he is, perhaps, of all bad men, the least injurious to society; the evil he does is properly nothing more than the omission of the good he might do. If of all the vices avarice is the most generally detested, it is the effect of an avidity common to all men: it is because men hate those from whom they can expect nothing. The greedy misers rail at sordid misers."—*Helvetius.*

18. **with lying lips**, better, *is of lying lips.* "It is often honey on the lips and venom in the heart."[a] **slander**, to slay reputations. **fool**, worthy to be despised and spurned. The word used means *fat, stupid.* He thinks it is the victim that is deceived, but forgets that God is the avenger of all such.

Character.—Reputation, of all possessions, is the most valuable, next to a good conscience, to which, indeed, it of right belongs, and from which it naturally springs. The root lies out of reach of injury. Your innocence, by God's grace, no one can take from you without your own consent: but the fruit of a fair reputation, so beautiful and fragrant, and in all respects so precious, this, alas! hangs exposed to the assault of every passenger; the lowest, as he goes along, can fling a stone upwards, and laugh to see the prize fall, though he cannot gather it. We have an account somewhere of a certain tribe of savages who are possessed of a persuasion that whenever they have slain a man they are immediately endowed with all his good qualities, which they think are transfused from the soul of the dead into the person that has killed him. You will not wonder that murders are frequent in that country, and that it is very dangerous for a man of merit to be found unguarded among people of such principles.[b]

19. **multitude of words**,[a] much talking puts a man in great danger of saying foolish and sinful things. **refraineth**, restraineth, holdeth in wise governance.[b]

Winged words (*v.* 19).—I. The tongue's license. 1. Hyperbole; 2. Egotism; 3. Trifling; 4. Ribaldry; 5. Talebearing; 6. Slander. II. Its evil result. 1. The dissipation of religious life; 2. The uncontrollable diffusion of the slander; 3. The Satanic malignancy of the temper.[c]

Reproof.—Phœbe Bartlet, a very little girl, went with some other children to gather plums in a neighbouring orchard. On bringing some of the fruit home, her mother mildly reproved her, and said she ought not to have gathered the plums without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child, not being sensible of the evil before, seemed greatly surprised, and, bursting into tears, cried out, "I won't have these plums!" and turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her, "Why did you ask me to go to that plum tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me." The other children did not seem much concerned; but there was no pacifying Phœbe. Her mother mentioned the circumstance to the owner of the tree, and requested of him that she might have the plums; but still she was deeply affected, and being asked what it was that troubled her now, she said that she wept "because it was sin." She declared that if Eunice were to ask her a hundred times she would not go again, and she retained an aversion to that fruit for a long time after.[d]

20, 21. (20) **choice silver**, of exceeding value are the words he speaks. **little worth**,[a] *lit.* is *dross*, or *thin filings.* (21) **feed many**, with sound instruction and guidance. **for want of**, better, "through him who wanteth understanding."[b]

Speech of wise and foolish (*v.* 20).—I. The speech of the good man is valuable, that of the other is worthless. II. The speech of the good man is nourishing, that of the other is killing. III.

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a "Of all the vices to wh. hum. nature is subject, treachery is the most infamous and detestable, being compounded of fraud, cowardice, and revenge. The greatest wrong will not justify it, as it destroys those principles of mutual confidence and security by wh. only society can exist."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*
"All wickedness is weakness."—*Milton.*
v. 18. *Dr. J. Barrow*, i. 480; *S. Ogden*, 419; *Dr. J. Tottie*, 321; *J. Wilder*, 37.
b Ogden.

a Job xxxv. 16; 1 Ti. v. 13.
"Of the eleven Apostles, as Peter spake most so he erred most."—*Bp. Hall.*
b "Never speak but when you have something to say. Wherefore shouldst thou run, seeing thou hast no tidings?"—*Bp. Butler.*
"He is wise that hath learned to speak little with others, and much with himself and God. How much might be gained for our souls if we would make a right use of this silence!"—*Arch. Leighton.*
c W. W. Whythe.
d Whitecross.

a "A popular and proverbial circumlocution for the idea of utter nothingness or worthlessness."—*O. Zöckler.*

b "The wise guide others to

The speech of the good man is wise, that of the other is foolish. IV. The speech of the good man is acceptable, that of the other is perverse.[c]

Ruling the tongue.—Socrates, the ecclesiastical historiographer, reports a story of one Pambo, a plain, ignorant man, who came to a learned man, and desired him to teach him some psalm or other. He began to read unto him the thirty-ninth Psalm, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." Having passed this first verse, Pambo shut the book, and took his leave, saying that he would go learn that point first. When he had absented himself for the space of some months, he was demanded by his reader when he would go forward. He answered, that he had not yet learned his old lesson; and he gave the very same answer to one that asked the like question forty-nine years after.[d]

22. **it maketh rich**, not the fruits of man's toil, but the blessing wh. God makes to rest upon it is the true riches. **addeth**, trans. "and labour added nothing beside it,"[a] *i.e.* as supplementary to the Div. blessing.

The moral phases of life (*v.* 22).—There are five things in these verses of great moral significance. I. Wealth making happy. II. Mischief done in sport. III. Justice done to all. IV. Indolence causing vexation. V. Character revealed in its issues.[b] —*God's blessing the greatest riches* (*v.* 22).—I. In what respects the blessing of God may be said to make rich. 1. Because it is in reality the source of all wealth: 2. Because it is in itself the greatest wealth. II. The peculiar happiness of the person so enriched. 1. With all other riches there is a mixture of sorrow to embitter them; 2. To the wealth God gives He adds no sorrow. Learn—(1) In what spirit to address yourselves to every duty in life; (2) What to look for as your chief portion.[c]

Effects of wealth.—I have a rich neighbour that is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh: the whole business of his life is to get money, and more money, that he may still get more and more money: he is still drudging on, and says that Solomon says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And it is true indeed: but he considers not that it is not in the power of riches to make a man happy: for it was wisely said by a man of great observation, that "There may be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side them." And yet God deliver us from pinching poverty, and grant that, having a competency, we may be content and thankful. Let us not repine, or so much as think the gifts of God unequally dealt, if we see another abound with riches, when, as God knows, the cares that are the keys that keep those riches hang often so heavily at the rich man's girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich man's happiness; few consider him to be like the silkworm, that, when she seems to play, is at the very same time spinning her own bowels, and consuming herself: and this many rich men do, loading themselves with corroding cares, to keep what they have probably unconscionably got.[d]

23—25. (23) **sport**, it is his pleasure and play.[a] **hath wisdom**, for his recreation and refreshment. (24) **the fear**, *i.e.* the thing wh. he fears. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that*

safety; the fool, empty-headed and empty-hearted, involves others like himself in destruction."—*Spk. Com.*

Ho. iv. 6.

c Dr. Thomas.

v. 20. *T. Manton*, iv. 1053.

v. 21. *T. Newman*, ii. 369.

d Spencer.

a "This is not to be taken literally, as though perchance labour were in itself cast aside, and the Oriental indolence commended: nor again is the privilege given to the pious of being released from ordinary human toils, and of folding their hands in reliance on their powerful Friend: the aim is only, after the emphatic and onesided manner of the proverb, to make prominent the other side of the case, overlooked by restless toilers."—*Hupfeld.*

Eccl. v. 19.

b Dr. Thomas.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Great wants proceed from great wealth; but they are undutiful children, for they sink wealth down to poverty."—*Home.*

d I. Walton

a Lit. "It is like a laugh to the fool, to execute evil counsel."

shall he also reap."[b] be granted, by God. (25) whirlwind, 2 Ki. ii. 1. By the fig. of the great storm is indicated the *suddenness*, the *thoroughness*, and the *helplessness* of the sinner's ruin.[c] everlasting foundation, *comp.* Mat. vii. 24—27.[d]

The desire of the righteous granted (*v.* 24).—I. Who is the righteous man? 1. Whom God counts so; 2. Whom God makes so; 3. Who is practically righteous. II. What are his desires? 1. Communion with God; 2. Enjoyment of holy ordinances; 3. The personal presence of God. III. What is meant by their being granted? IV. Application. 1. There are other desires than those of the righteous; 2. Art thou righteous?[e]

26. vinegar, or the sour wine used by the peasants. smoke, of wood, wh. makes the eyes smart. so, causing like annoyance and vexation. sluggard, who loiters on his errands. "Laziness is bad for the man himself, but is most vexatious to those who are unfortunate enough to employ him in their service."[a]

Idle people.—Idle persons are like wens in the face, which receive of the body's nourishment, but serve only to disfigure it. Those that are no workers in God's account are "disorderly walkers." Augustus built an Apragopolis, a city void of business; but God made not the world to be the nursery of idleness. The Ethiopians (as the historian observeth) would acquaint their youth that they were born to labour, by accustoming them betimes to fling great stones. Amongst the Turks every man must follow some trade, the Grand Seigneur himself not excepted. The *censores morum* among the Romans were to observe who were diligent, who were negligent in their vocations, and accordingly to commend or condemn them. The Grecians, according to Solon's law, were great discouragers of them that, like vermin, lived only to eat what others earn. The council of the Areopagites inquired how every man lived, and punished such as they found idle. The devils themselves are diligent about their deeds of darkness; creatures void of life are serviceable in their places and stations; angels, nay, God Himself, is always working. An idle person cannot find, either in heaven or hell, a pattern.[b]

27. prolongeth days, a statement frequently repeated in this book: here the antithesis may be thus expressed, "The fear of Jehovah makes great days, but the years of the wicked shall be made little."[a]

The spiritual monk.—A certain brother came to the convent at Mount Sinai, and finding all the monks at work, shook his head and said to the abbot, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth," and "Mary hath chosen that good part." "Very well," said the abbot, and ordered the good brother to a cell and gave him a book to read. The monk retired, and sat hour after hour all day long alone, wondering much that nobody called him to dinner or offered him any refreshment. Hungry and wearied out, the night at length arrived: he left his solitary cell, and repaired to the apartment of the abbot. "Father," says he, "do not the brethren eat to-day?" "Oh yes," replied the abbot, "they have eaten plentifully." "Then how is it, father," said the monk, "that you did not call me to partake with them?" "Because, brother," replied the abbot, you are a spiritual man, and have no need of carnal food. For our part we are obliged

b Ga. vi. 7; Job iii. 25; Pr. xi. 27; Is. lxvi. 4.

c J. Miller.

d Ps. cxxv. 1.

e J. Bunyan.

v. 24. *R. Dukes*, 345; *T. Knowles*, ii. 102.

a Dav. Thomas, D.D.

"Perhaps the nearest approach in the whole book to the humorous."—*Spk. Com.*

"Idleness is a constant sin, and labour is a duty. Idleness is the devil's home for temptation, and for unprofitable, distracting musings; while labour profiteth others and ourselves."—*Baxter.*

b Swinnocke.

a J. Miller.

Virtue is the surest road to longevity; but vice meets with an early doom.

"How long shall we sit in our porticoes praising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes."—*Thoreau.*

to eat, and on that account we work; but you, brother, who have chosen 'the good part,' you sit and read all the day long, and are above the want of the meat that perisheth." "Pardon me, father," said the monk, "I perceive my mistake."

28. **gladness**, bec. it shall surely gain its fruition. **perish**,[a] in that day when all human works are tried by fire, and the worthless burned up.

True and false hope (*v.* 28).—I. All men cherish some sort of hope. II. True hope ends in happiness. III. False hope ends in disappointment.[b]

False hope.—A "hope" is to some like a passport, which one keeps quietly in his pocket till the time for the journey, and then produces it. Or like life-preservers, which hang useless around the vessel until the hour of danger comes, when the captain calls on every passenger to save himself: and then they are taken down and blown up, and each man, with his hope under his arm, strikes out for the land: and so such men would keep their religious hope hanging until death comes, and then take it down and inflate it, that it may buoy them up, and float them over the dark river to the heavenly shore. Or as the inhabitants of Block Island keep their boats hauled high upon the beach, and only use them now and then, when they would cross to the mainland; so such men keep their hopes high and dry upon the shore of life, only to be used when they have to cross the flood that divides this island of time from the mainland of eternity.[c]

29, 30. (29) **way of the Lord**, the Div. order of the world. In the long run it surely turns out to be *for* the upright, and *against* the wicked. **strength**, both mental and moral.[a] "A fortress, wherever he goes he is in a castle."[b] (30) **never be removed**, *comp.* ch. xiii. 3; Ps. xxxvii. 22.

The Lord's way (*v.* 29).—I. The Lord has a way for man to walk in. 1. He has a way for Himself; 2. He has a way for His creatures: 3. He has a way for man, the way of social justice and Divine worship. II. The man who walks in this way gets strength. 1. Intellectual strength; 2. Moral strength; 3. Increasing strength.[c]

The way of the Lord.—The ways of the Lord confirm upright hearts. They make upright hearts strong—strong to withstand temptations, strong to conquer corruptions, strong to rejoice under afflictions, strong to perform the most heavenly duties, strong to improve the most spiritual mercies; the ways of the Lord make strong, they confirm such hearts as walk in them. The most renowned and honoured saints that ever breathed on earth, and that are now triumphant in heaven, have walked in these ways of God.[d]

31, 32. (31) **bringeth forth**, "as a tree full of life and sap brings forth its fruit. **cut off**, or cut down, as are unfruitful trees.[a] (32) **know**, find always, as if instinctively, what is acceptable. **frowardness**, all kinds of deceit and ill-nature.[b] Lit. "is perversions and destructions." There is a "forwardness that is distasteful to all consciences, and repugnant to the heart of God and the good."[c]

A gossiping tongue.—A man who, for a moment's gossiping gratification, drops an idle word affecting a neighbour's character,

a Job viii. 23, xi. 20; Ps. cxii. 10.

b W. W. Whythe.

v. 28. *W. G. Barnes*, ii. 119; *Dr. H. Blair*, v. 1.

"Hope is the daughter of Faith, but such as is a staff to her aged mother, and will produce a bold and wise profession of the truth before men, as also prayer to God. It is as the cork upon the net: though the lead on the one side sinks it down, yet the cork on the other keeps it up."—*J. Trapp.*

c Beecher.

a The more we do in the service of God, the more we are enabled to do.

b Wordsworth.

v. 29. *K. Reyner*, 26; *G. J. Zollikofer*, i. 262.

c Dr. Thomas.

"He that knows a little of the world will admire it enough to fall down and worship it; but he that knows it most will most despise it."—*Colton.*

d T. Brookes.

a "The abuse of God's gift of speech will lead ultimately to its forfeiture. There shall, at last, be the silence of shame and confusion."—*Spk. Com.*

b "When God's honour and the

edification and improvement of one's neighbour is not the chief end of our speaking, it is a sign that Eternal Wisdom has not yet wholly sanctified our hearts."—*Burke.*

c Dav. Thomas, D.D.

Jas. iii. 13.

d F. W. Robertson.

resembles that Scotchman who, from partiality to the flora of his native land, sowed a little thistle-down in the British colony where he had raised his tabernacle, and where that nuisance to agriculturists had been unknown up to that time. It grew and flourished; and breezes—like the active wind of talk, that soon propagates a slander—carried the winged seeds hither and thither, to found for their obnoxious species thousands of new homes. It is as unsafe to keep company with one whose tongue is hung too loosely as to ride in a vehicle whose linchpins are loose.[d]

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1. false balance,[a] used literally, but also as representing all unrighteous dealings. With the keen bargaining spirit characteristic of the Jews, this must always have been to them a besetting sin.[b] just weight, *lit.* a *full stone*, bec. stones were used instead of metal weights.

Weights and measures (*v.* 1).—I. The text brings before us this solemn and important truth, that God sees and takes notice of all business transactions. II. The just weight being the simple but expressive representation of all fair dealing, the words now before us mean that all fair dealing is God's delight. III. There must be just dealing towards God as well as towards man.[c]

Punishment of fraud in the East.—The kind of fraud here referred to was held in great detestation, and frequently visited with severe punishment when detected. "A police officer observing one morning a female, not a native, carrying a large piece of cheese, inquired where she had purchased it. Being ignorant of the vendor's name, she conducted him to his shop, and the magistrate suspecting the quantity to be deficient in weight, placed it in the scales, and found his suspicions verified; whereupon he straightway ordered his attendants to cut a portion of flesh from the delinquent's person equivalent to the just measure. The order was instantly executed, and the sufferer bled to death."[d]

2. pride cometh, *lit.* "there hath come pride, and there will come shame," *i.e.* on the proud.[a] lowly,[b] derived from the Chaldee *to conceal*, and denotes strictly those who hide themselves, or renounce self.

The advent and evil of pride (*v.* 2).—I. The advent of pride. How does it come? 1. By associating only with inferiors; 2. By practically ignoring the true standards; 3. By a practical disregard to the majesty of God. II. The evil of pride. See Bible examples. 1. Shame of folly; 2. Shame of guilt.[c]

Pride.—The foulest stain and highest absurdity in our nature is pride. And yet this base hedgehog so rolls himself up in his bristly coat we can seldom get a sight of his claws. It is the root of unbelief. Men cannot submit to the righteousness of Christ, and pride cleaves to them like a pitched shirt to the skin, or like leprosy to the wall. No sharp culture of ploughing and harrowing will clear the ground of it. The foul weed will be sure to spring up again with the next kindly rain. This diabolical sin has brought more scourges on my back than anything else; and

a Le. xix. 36; De. xxv. 13—16.

b Comp. Mat. vii. 12; Phi. iv. 8; 1 Th. iv. 6.

"As religion towards God is a branch of universal righteousness (he is not an honest man that is not devout), so righteousness towards men is a branch of true religion; for he is not a godly man that is not honest, nor can he expect that his devotion should be accepted."—*Mat. Henry.*

c H. S. Brown.

d Jolliffe.

a Pr. xvi. 18, xviii. 12.

"What is pride? It is inordinate self-appreciation. It is the putting of too high an estimate on self. This feeling *comes* to a soul. It is not born in it."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b "Lowly souls become full of wisdom, as the low place becomes full of water."—*Rabbinical paraphrase.*

Lu. xiv. 10, 11.

c Dr. Thomas.

it is of so insinuating a nature that I know not how to part with it. I hate it, and love it; I quarrel with it, and embrace it; I dread it, and yet suffer it to lie down in my bosom. It pleads a right, through the fall, to be a tenant for life; and has such a wonderful appetite, that it can feed kindly both on grease and garbage—will be as warm and snug in a cloister as a palace, and be as much delighted with a fine prayer as a foul oath.[d]

3. integrity, wholeness, simplicity, sincerity. guide them, by giving them the keen, quick sense of right and wrong.[a] perverseness, or *slipperiness*, perhaps *ill-nature*. destroy them, with violence.

The value of integrity (*v.* 3).—I. Direct attention to the intrinsic worth and excellency of integrity. 1. It is in exact correspondence with the character and mind of our Creator; 2. It is conformity to the Divine will; 3. It imparts stability and strength to all the other virtues and excellencies of the human character. II. The benefits and advantages which it confers upon the individual who possesses it. 1. It guides him in the affairs of life; 2. It saves from doubts and misgivings; 3. It secures the good wishes, assistance, and co-operation of others; 4. It produces peace and satisfaction of mind; 5. It has advantages also for the season of adversity. III. The benefits which it confers upon society at large. 1. Society makes efforts to secure integrity between man and man; 2. It confers the power to do good; 3. It commends religion and the Christian profession; 4. It has great benefits in the final issue of things.[b]

Once too often.—There is an old Grecian legend of a diver who boasted of his skill to bring up treasures from the sea. To test his power the people threw many a silver cup and many a golden coin into deep water, all of which he brought to the surface with triumph. But one day a disguised fiend threw a tinsel crown into a whirlpool, and challenged the confident diver to bring it up, promising him, if he succeeded, the power to wear it, and to transmit it to his children. Down he sprang after the bauble, but the Nereids of the sea, hearing the clangour of the crown when it fell upon the grottoes, closed around him as he was grasping the prize, and held him fast till he perished. The most daring may dare once too often; folly, though long successful, will plunge its victim into ruin at last.

Putting off repentance.—A hermit was conducted by an angel into a wood, where he saw an old man cutting down boughs to make up a burden. When it was large he tied it up, and attempted to lift it on his shoulders and carry it away. But finding it very heavy, he laid it down again, cut more wood, and heaped it on, and then tried again to carry it off. This he repeated several times, always adding something to the load, after trying in vain to raise it from the ground. In the meantime the hermit, astonished at the old man's folly, desired the angel to explain what this meant. "You behold," said he, "in the foolish old man a representation of those who, being made sensible of the burden of their sins, resolve to repent, but soon grow weary, and instead of lessening their burden, increase it every day. At each trial they find the task heavier than before, and so put it off a little longer, in vain hoping that they will by-and-by be more able to accomplish it. Thus they go on adding to their burden till it grows too heavy to be borne, and then, in despair of God's

v. 2. *M. A. Melan.* i. 58; *R. Warner*, iii. 213.

d J. Berridge.

a Eph. vi. 14; 1 Pe. iii. 13.

b R. Redpath, M.A.

v. 3. *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 313; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 112.

"An entirely honest man, in the severe sense of the word, exists no more than an entirely dishonest knave; the best and the worst are only approximations to those qualities. Who are those that never contradict themselves? Yet honesty never contradicts itself. Who are they who always contradict themselves? Yet knavery is mere self-contradiction. Thus the knowledge of man determines not the things themselves, but their proportions, the quantum of congruities and incongruities."—*Lavater.*

A mother explained to her little daughter, who could not comprehend her father's death, that God had sent for him, and would by-and-by send for them all, how soon they could not tell. "Well, then, mother," said the child, "if God is going to send for us soon, and we don't know just when, hadn't we better begin to

pack up and get ready to go?" This incident, related to the wounded and dying inmates of an army hospital, was the means of much good.

c S. S. Times.

Neglecting preparation for eternity is like the traveller across the desert, or through a hostile wilderness, who provides nothing for his journey; like the ambassador to a far country, who forgets his message; like the invited guest who put not on the wedding-garment; like the fool who counselled his soul to take its ease, while God's voice called him to judgment.

d Bp. Villers.

mercy and with their sins unrepented of, they lie down and die, Turn again, my son, and behold the end of the old man, whom thou sawest heaping up a load of boughs." The hermit looked and saw him in vain attempting to remove the pile, which was now accumulated far beyond his strength to raise. His feeble limbs tottered over their burden, the poor remains of his strength were fast ebbing away, the darkness of death was gathering around him, and after a convulsive and impotent attempt to lift the pile, he fell down and expired.[c]

Bible light refused.—I once happened to be on a visit to a great castle, situate on the top of a hill. There was a steep cliff, at the bottom of which was a rapid river. Late one night, there was a person anxious to get home from that castle, in the midst of a thunderstorm. The night was blackness itself; the woman was asked to stop till the storm was over, but she declined; next they begged her to take a lantern, that she might be able to keep upon the road from the castle to her home. She said she did not require a lantern, but could do very well without one. She went. Perhaps she was frightened by the storm—I know not the cause—but in the midst of the darkness she wandered from the path, and fell over the cliff; the next day that swollen river washed to the shore the poor lifeless body of this foolish woman. How many such foolish ones are there who, when the light is offered to them, only say, "I am not afraid; I fear not my end!" and how many have perished because they have refused the light of God's truth, which would have guided them on the road to heaven.[d]—"*Honesty is the best policy.*"—*A poor but honest youth.*—A lad who was on his way to an uncle, to ask aid for a sick sister and her children, found a wallet containing a sum of money. The help sought was refused, and the distressed family was pinched with want. The boy revealed his fortune to his mother, but expressed a doubt about using any portion of the money. She confirmed his good resolution, and the pocket-book was advertised, and the owner found. Being a man of wealth, upon learning the history of the family, he presented the whole sum to the sick mother, and took the boy into his service, who ultimately became one of the most successful merchants of the day. Honesty always brings its reward,—to the conscience if not to the pocket.

4. day of wrath, any time of national calamity, such as a siege. Then riches rather increase the peril than provide a safeguard. righteousness, the men of character are always the men of influence and power in times of calamity. from death, peril of death.[e]

The Indian and the quarter of a dollar.—An Indian visiting his white neighbours, asked for a little tobacco to smoke, and one of them having some loose in his pocket, gave him a handful. The day following, the Indian came back, inquiring for the donor, saying he had found a quarter of a dollar among the tobacco. Being told that, as it was given him, he might as well keep it, he answered, pointing to his breast, "I got a good man and a bad man here; and the good man say, it is not mine, I must return it to the owner; the bad man say, why he gave it you, and it is your own now: the good man say, that not right, the tobacco is yours, not the money; the bad man say, never mind, you got it, go buy some dram: the good man say, no, no, you must not do

e "A good conscience will make death easy, and take off the terror of it; it is the privilege of the righteous only not to be hurt of the second death, and so not much hurt by the first."—*Mat. Henry.*

"Probity is as rarely in accord with interest as reason is with passion."—*Sanial Dubay.*

so: so I don't know what to do; and I think to go to sleep; but the good man and the bad kept talking all night, and trouble me; and now I bring the money back, I feel good."

5, 6. (5) direct, marg. *rectify;* make plain. fall . . wickedness, wh. thus is found to bear quite other fruitage than he expected. (6) taken, as if in a trap. naughtiness, 1 Sa. xvii. 28.

Character inherited.—An old man died a few years ago in the Massachusetts State prison. He was seventy-six years old, and had spent the last eight years of his life in a cell in that gloomy jail. His wife for years had been a prisoner there too, and so had his daughter, and seven of his sons. Were not "the iniquities of the father visited upon the children?" In that same State, seventy years ago, a good minister died, who for forty-one years had been a beloved pastor over the same church. He was the fourteenth eldest son of the same name and family who had been a preacher of the Gospel. Since his death, one hundred of his descendants have been Christians, and eight of his sons and grandsons have also been ministers. Through that blessed family, for many long years, the Great Father of love has been "showing mercy to thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments."

v. 5. *R. W. Dibdin,* 242.

"A good name is properly that reputation of virtue that every man may challenge as his right and due in the opinions of others, till he has made forfeit of it by the viciousness of his actions."—*South.*

7. expectation, wh. concerned no more than the things of this life. unjust men, lit. *of vanities,* men of vanity.[a]

The terrible in human history (*v.* 7).—There are two terrible events here. I. Death meeting the wicked man. 1. Death does not wait for reformation of character; 2. The greatest enemies of God and His universe are overcome. II. Hope leaving the human soul.[b]

Spira's death-bed.—Francis Spira, an Italian lawyer, embraced Christianity, discovered great zeal in its diffusion, and was distinguished for his extensive knowledge of the Gospel. When he found that he was likely to suffer for the sake of Christ, he publicly recanted; and soon after, being seized with illness, and having the prospect of death before him, he was visited by several eminent Christians, who conversed and prayed with him, but without avail. He died in a state of the most awful despair, declaring the impossibility of his finding mercy at the hands of God.

a "Immortality and a future retribution are presumptively suggested in this passage."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Dr. Thomas.

8. is delivered, from calamities wh. fall upon the wicked.[a] in his stead, takes his place, enters into the trouble.[b]

Trouble in relation to the righteous and the wicked (*v.* 8).—All men are in trouble. I. The righteous are going out of trouble. 1. Now partially; 2. In the future completely. II. The wicked are going into trouble. 1. The trouble they are going to is unmitigated; 2. Unending.[c]

A martyr.—It is related, in the memoirs of the celebrated William Whiston, that a Protestant, in the days of Queen Mary, of the name of Barber, was sentenced to be burned. He walked to Smithfield, was bound to the stake, the fagots were piled around him, and the executioner only waited the word of command to apply the torch. At this crisis, tidings came of the queen's death; the officers were compelled to stay proceedings till the pleasure of Elizabeth should be known: and thus the life of the good man was spared, to labour, with some of his descendants, successfully in the service of the Lord Jesus and His Church.[d]

a "This proposition cannot be the result of experimental observation, but only the fresh vigorous expression of *faith* in God's justice, such as believes where it does not see."—*Elster.*

b Est. v. 14, vii. 10; Da. iii. 22, vi. 22, 24.

c Dr. Thomas.

"I bless God," said Dr. Watts, "I can lie down with comfort to-night, not being anxious whether I awake in this world or another."

d R. T. S.

9. hypocrite, Job viii. 13. mouth, the agent of his deceptions. "The artifices of that shrewdness which is the instrument of wickedness." through knowledge, or superior discernment.

Hypocrisy and knowledge (*v.* 9).—From the text we may infer—I. That hypocrisy is destructive. It—1. Implies the pernicious; 2. Employs the pernicious. II. That knowledge is restorative.[a]

Universality of hypocrisy.—The Emperor Frederick III., when one said unto him he would go and find some place where no hypocrites inhabited, told him he must travel, then, far enough beyond the Sauromatæ, or the Frozen Ocean; for yet, when he came there, he should find a hypocrite if he found himself there. And it is true that every man is a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is a lesson that every man readily takes in It continues with age, it appears with infancy: the wise and learned practise it; the duller and more rude attain unto it. All are not fit for the wars; learning must have the picked and choicest wits; arts must have leisure and pains; but all sorts are apt enough, and thrive in the mystery of dissimulation. The whole throng of mankind, the whole world, is but a shop of counterfeit wares,—a theatre of hypocritical disguises. Grace is the only antidote.[b]

10, 11. (10) goeth well with, in the prosperity of. Perhaps meaning when the righteous are set in places of authority and honour. shouting, the shout of rejoicing at the loss of evil influence. (11) blessing, implying the active benevolence: or the prayers he offers for the city's good. The term may, however, mean the blessing wh. God gives the city for the sake of the righteous who are in it. mouth of the wicked, the medium for the expression of their evil.[a]

Public conscience in relation to moral character (*vv.* 10, 11).—The words lead us to notice—I. The public conscience in relation to the righteous. 1. It is gratified by his prosperity; 2. It acknowledges his usefulness. II. Public conscience in relation to the wicked. 1. It rejoices in their ruin; 2. It acknowledges their mischief.[b]

Regard to the rules of morality.—The regard to the general rules of morality is what is properly called a sense of duty: a principle of the greatest consequence in human life, and the only principle by which the bulk of mankind are capable of directing their actions. There is scarce any man who, by discipline, education, and example, may not be impressed with a regard to these general rules of conduct, as to act upon almost every occasion with tolerable decency, and, through the whole of his life, avoid a tolerable degree of blame. Without this sacred regard to the general rules of morality, there is no man whose conduct can be much depended upon. It is this which constitutes the most essential difference between a man of principle and honour and a worthless fellow. The one adheres on all occasions, steadily and resolutely, to his maxims, and preserves through the whole of his life one even tenor of conduct. The other acts variously and accidentally, as humour, inclination, or interest chance to be uppermost.[c]

12, 13. (12) despiseth, showeth contempt for: reviles. Only the heartless man is unable to find some goodness in others. holdeth his peace, watchful lest he should make mischief. He is considerate of the reputation of others. (13) talebearer,

a Dr. Thomas. "When Alexander saw himself wounded and in danger of death, he then saw the vanity of those flatterers that would have persuaded him he was a god. So when we see those things upon which we set our hearts, as if our chief good, as if a deity were in them, to be wounded and ready to perish, let us learn to alter our thoughts of them, to take off our hearts from them."—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

b C. Spencer.

a "The 'mouth of the wicked,' the channel of impieties, falsehoods, impurities, and innumerable pernicious errors, has caused in all ages, and is still causing, the overthrow of States."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

v. 11. *W. Reading*, ii. 578.

b Dr. Thomas.

"Morality is that relation or proportion which actions bear to a given rule. It is generally used in reference to a good life."—*C. Buck.*

"Talk they of morals, O thou bleeding Lamb! The grand morality is love of Thee."—*Young.*

c Adam Smith.

a Fausset. Sheridan spoke in his day of a set of "malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both

"one trading as a pedlar in scandal, whose propensity to talk leads him to betray confidence."[a] **faithful spirit**, so one who can be trusted.[b]

Types of character in social life (*vv.* 12, 13).—Here four distinct types of character. I. The insolent. II. The respectful. III. The tattler. IV. The trustworthy.[c]

Character formed by association.—A man's belief is not the only thing that works upon him. There is a great mistake in saying that as a man believes so is he, if you mean that his character depends upon his belief in any technical theological truth. What a man is depends in a great measure upon his father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and friends; that is, it depends partly on the things that he believes, and partly upon the influences that are working upon him in the family, in the society, and in the party to which he belongs. There are a thousand and one circumstances that have much to do with what a man is, and his character is not formed alone by his technical beliefs.[d]

14. **no counsel**, power to steer or guide: no helmsmanship: *lit.* no piloting of a ship by ropes: ch. i. 5. **multitude of counsellors**, assuming that they are wise ones.[a]

Wisdom the want of states (*v.* 14).—This verse implies three facts. I. The people require government. II. The government required must be that of intelligence. III. The necessary intelligence must be reached by consultation.[b]

The faculty of speech.—The due and proper use of any natural faculty or power is to be judged of by the end and design for which it was given us. The chief purpose for which the faculty of speech was given to man is, plainly, that we might communicate our thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the affairs of the world; for business, and for our improvement in knowledge and learning. But the good Author of our nature designed us not only necessaries, but likewise enjoyment and satisfaction, in that being He hath graciously given, and in that condition of life He hath placed us in. There are secondary uses of our faculties; they administer to delight, as well as neces ity: and as they are equally adapted to both, there is no doubt but He intended them for our gratification, as well as for the support and continuance of our being. The secondary use of speech is to please and be entertaining to each other in conversation. This is in every respect allowable and right: it unites men closer in alliances and friendships; gives us a fellow-feeling of the prosperity and unhappiness of each other; and is in several respects serviceable to virtue, and to promote good behaviour in the world. And, provided there be not too much time spent in it, if it were considered only in the way of gratification and delight, men must have strange notions of God and of religion, to think that He can be offended with it, or that it is any way inconsistent with the strictest virtue. But the truth is, such sort of conversation, though it has no particular good tendency, yet it has a general good one: it is social and friendly, and tends to promote humanity, good-nature, and civility.[c]

15. **surety**, strikes hands, as the sign of entering into a compact. **a stranger**, perhaps a foreigner, one with whom he has only business relations. **smart for it**, by the exaction of his bond. **is sure**, or secure.

male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it."

b "Faithfulness is shown not only in doing what a man has been commissioned to do, but in doing it quietly, and without garrulity."—*Spk. Com.*

c Dr. Thomas.

d Beecher.

a "In our private affairs we shall often find it to our advantage to advise with many. If they agree in their advice our way will be the more clear; if they differ, we shall hear what is to be said on all sides, and be the better able to determine."—*Mat. Henry.*

Comp. Pr. xv. 22, xx. 18, xxiv. 6.

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 14. *Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 48.

"When speech is given to a soul holy and true, time, and its dome of ages, becomes as a mighty whispering gallery, round which the imprisoned utterance runs, and reverberates for ever."—*J. Martineau.*

c Bp. Butler.

"A money-lender.—He serves you in the present tense; he lends you in the

oonditional mood; keeps you in the subjunctive; and ruins you in the future."—*Addison.*

a J. Selden.

Mortgage.—In case I receive a thousand pounds, and mortgage as much land as is worth two thousand to you, if I do not pay the money at such a day, I fail. Whether you may take my land and keep it in point of conscience? Answer. If you had my land as security wholly for your money, then you are not to keep it; but if we bargain so, that if I did not repay your thousand pounds my land should go for it, be it what it will, no doubt you may, with a safe conscience, keep it; for in these things all the obligation is *servabo fidem.*[a]

a 1 Ps. iii. 1–4.

16. **gracious woman,** prob. intended for personification of *grace.* A gracious woman is a sensible, God-fearing woman. **honour,** virtue and character being to her what riches are to men.[a]

v. 16. *Bp. Ken,* 113.

"The prevailing manners of an age depend, more than we are aware of, or are willing to allow, on the conduct of the women. This is one of the principal things on which the great machine of society turns. Those who allow the influence which female graces have in contributing to polish the manners of men would do well to reflect how great an influence female morals must also have on their conduct."—*Blair.*

A secret for the ladies.—There are women who cannot grow old—women who, without any special effort, remain always young and always attractive. The number is smaller than it should be, but there is still a sufficient number to mark the wide difference between this class and the other. The secret of this perpetual youth lies not in beauty, for some possess it who are not at all handsome; nor in dress, for they are frequently careless in that respect, so far as the mere arbitrary dictates of fashion are concerned; nor in having nothing to do, for these ever young women are always as busy as bees, and it is very well known that idleness will fret people into old age and ugliness faster than overwork. The charm, we imagine, lies in a sunny temper—neither more nor less—the blessed gift of always looking on the bright side of life, and of stretching the mantle of charity over everybody's faults and failings. It is not much of a secret, but it is all that we have been able to discover, and we have watched such with great interest, and a determination to speak truthfully for the benefit of the rest of the sex. It is very provoking that it is something which cannot be corked up and sold for five shillings a bottle; but as this is impossible, why, the most of us will have to keep on growing as ugly and disagreeable as usual.

17. **merciful man,** one of a generous, charitable disposition. "Charity is twice blessed."[a] **cruel,** as regardless of the wants and sufferings of others. **his own flesh,** poss. intimating that such a man would be of a niggardly or penurious disposition.

a "The good Samaritan, who bathed the wounds, and provided for the wants of a plundered Jew, obtained a greater profit on the transaction than the sufferer who was saved by his benevolence."—*Arnot.*

Ps. xli. 3; Mat. v. 7.

v. 17. *Dr. A. Rees,* iv. 448.

Matthew Hale and the poor.—It is said of the excellent Lord Chief Justice Hale, that he frequently invited his poor neighbours to dinner, and made them sit at table with himself. If any of them were sick, so that they could not come, he would send provisions to them warm from his own table. He did not confine his bounties to the poor of his own parish, but diffused supplies to the neighbouring parishes as occasion required. He always treated the old, the needy, and the sick, with the tenderness and familiarity that became one who considered they were of the same nature with himself, and were reduced to no other necessities but such as he himself might be brought to.

a 1 Cor. ix. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 6; Jas. iii. 18; Gal. vi. 8. *b Zeta* in 400 Sks.

v. 18. *S. Hieron,* i. 393; *Dr. J. Abbadie,* i. 57; *I.*

18, 19. (18) **deceitful work,** such it will surely prove to the man himself who does it. **sure reward,** permanent and satisfying return.[a] (19) **life,** used inclusively of all true and lasting blessings.

The deceitfulness of sin (*v.* 18).—We have here—I. Opposite characters. II. Opposite practices. III. Opposite results. To

the righteous there is—1. A certain reward: 2. A suitable reward; 3. A satisfying reward; 4. An abiding reward. Advise:—(1) Pause and inquire if such a change has been effected in you; (2) Pray for convincing and converting grace; (3) Persevere through evil and good report.[b]—*The reward of righteousness* (*v.* 19).—I. Righteousness proves the spiritual life to be begun in our souls; evil shows that our souls are still dead in sin. II. Righteousness is connected with the spiritual nourishment which maintains life; evil with the neglect of such nourishment, which occasions death. III. Righteousness leads to courses of action which prolong life; evil, from its very nature, conducts to death. IV. Righteousness associates us with those who are alive to God, thus helping to maintain life in the soul: evil unites us with those who are spiritually dead, and brings us into the same state with them. V. Righteousness ensures the Divine protection, so that life is guarded and defended; evil incurs God's wrath, which is death. VI. Righteousness conducts to life everlasting in heaven; evil to eternal death in hell.

The violet-sower.—One beautiful spring morning, a little child sat on the stone at his father's door, in the sunshine, playing with a number of small seeds. He threw them about carelessly, until there was only one left. "I will plant this in the earth," said he. So he ran to a bank, and having made a tiny hole, he laid the shining seed within it, and covered it up, raising a little heap of earth above it to mark the spot, that he might return to look at it again. And the spring sunbeams smiled upon the mound where the little seed lay buried, and the gentle dew and refreshing rain moistened it. Thus was it nourished, till at last it opened its smooth case, and spread its clasping fibres round it, and grew, and grew, until two little green leaves passed up above the soil: these soon raised themselves higher, and at length it became a full-grown plant, with two tiny buds, which soon expanded into sweet blue violets. But the child did not see them, for he was far away. When autumn came, these sweet flowers faded, and in their place came two little bags of seed, and as soon as they were ripe, they showered down on the earth a great number of seeds, like the one the little child had planted. While the stern cold winter lasted, these little seeds lay snugly in their bed of earth; but when the mild spring sunshine beamed once more, they too sprang up, spreading their green leaves and opening their graceful flowers beside the parent plant; and every succeeding season there sprang up more violet plants, until the bank was covered with their luxuriant green leaves, and such a number of violets opened their modest flowers, that the air was filled with their fragrance, and the passers-by paused to admire the lovely spot; and many took seeds away to plant in their gardens, and a little city child carefully carried a young plant to her humble home, and placed it in a box in her father's window, that it might smile upon her with its sweet blue eyes. Thus years went by. The little boy was now a man in a far-off country, but his heart still loved his childhood's home, and therefore he crossed the seas and visited it again in the sweet spring-time. When he came to the bank of violets, he paused to breathe the delicious perfume; then he remembered how, in his infant play, he had sown the solitary seed. "Can it be," he asked, as he looked in astonishment at the spot, "that all these have

Priest, 28; *W. Laget*, ii. 172; *P. Mouchon*, ii. 53; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 250; *H. J. Hastings*, 369.

v. 19. *Dr. R. Graves*, iv. 433.

"Evil is easily discovered. There is an infinite variety. Good is almost unique. But some kinds of evil are almost as difficult to discover as that which we call good; and often particular evil of this class passes for good. It needs even a certain greatness of soul to attain to this, as to that which is good."—*Pascal.*

"Good sense and good nature are never separated, though the ignorant world has thought otherwise. Good nature, by which I mean beneficence and candour, is the product of right reason, which, of necessity, will give allowance to the failings of others, by considering that there is nothing perfect in mankind; and by distinguishing that which comes nearest to excellency, though not absolutely free from faults, will certainly produce a candour in the judge."—*Dryden.*

"'Tis good nature only wins the heart: it moulds the body to an easy grace, and brightens every feature of the face: it smoothes the unpolished tongue with eloquence, and adds persuasion to the finest sense."—*Stillingfleet.*

sprung from the one I planted?" Then, stooping, he gathered a flower, and as he thoughtfully gazed on its simple beauty he exclaimed, "I will never waste a seed again!"

20, 21. (20) froward, in sense of wilful. upright, steadily waiting on God for counsel and guidance, prepared to follow cheerfully in His way. (21) hand in hand, a fig. for combining together, taken from the custom of clasping hands in suretyship. seed . . delivered, though they may be alone and unaided.[a]

God's anger with the wicked (*v.* 20).—To think that God is only "angry with the wicked" is but half a truth; and half a truth becomes practically a lie. To picture our Father in heaven all in shade is to hide half His loveliness, and keep His creatures terrified away. There is another side to His character.[b]

Hand to hand.—"*Though* hand *join* in hand." This is literally "hand to hand," the italicised words being added by our translators; and interpreters differing about the meaning of the phrase "hand to hand." Fürst looks upon it as a formula of assurance, "the hand upon it;" but Gesenius, comparing the Arabic, considers it a formula of succession, "for all generations." What our translators meant is seen in the note of the Genevan Version, which preceded theirs, and was the same rendering: "Though they make never so many friends, yet shall they not escape." The Septuagint turned the phrase somewhat differently: "He that unjustly strikes hands shall not be unpunished." Others take the Hebrew word as meaning "blow." "Blow after blow the wicked will not be amended." It may be objected to the interpretation of Gesenius and De Wette that "from generation to generation" is expressed in various other ways, principally by *Dor*. On the other hand, the Authorised Version is in accordance with Oriental usage: "When two persons make a contract, they bring the palms of their hands into contact, and then raise them to their lips and foreheads."

22. jewel, better, *ring*, with reference to the Eastern nose-ring, worn by ladies.[a] swine's snout, fr. this it appears that in ancient Syria swine wore such rings to prevent them from doing mischief. fair woman, of attractive personal appearance. without discretion, *lit.* one who has turned aside in respect to taste: one who lacks moral sensibility.[b] One of a loose and dissolute conversation.[c]

Bedizened wickedness (*v.* 22).—I. Here is a very incongruous conjunction in one person. II. Here is a very revolting conjunction in one person. III. Here is a very common conjunction in one person. 1. Wickedness is promoted by personal attractions; 2. Wickedness is fond of personal attractions.[d]

Taste.—

What then is taste, but those internal powers
Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
To each fine impulse? a discerning sense
Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
For things deformed or disarranged or gross
In species? This nor gems, nor stores of gold,
Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow;
But God alone, when first His active hand

a Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26.

"No combination of men, however great in number, vast in wisdom, mighty in strength, affluent in resources, can prevent punishment from befalling the wicked. It must come. The moral constitution of the soul, the justice of the universe, and the almightiness of God, render all human efforts to avoid it futile. 'Be sure your sin will find you out.'"—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Ge. xi. 1–8.

b *Dr. Arnot.*

v. 21. *J. H. Newman, Subjects of the Day*, 89; *J. A. Slade*, ii. 328.

a "Nose-rings were fastened in the central division of the nose, and hung down over the mouth: they have been ornaments in common use in the East from the time of the patriarchs down to the present day."—*Delitzsch.* Ge. xxiv. 22, 47; Is. iii. 21.

b "'Without taste;' void of the subtle tact and grace, without which mere beauty is as ill-bestowed as the nose-ring, not on a fair woman's face, but in the snout of an unclean beast."—*Spk. Com.*

Imprints the secret bias of the soul.
He, mighty Parent! wise and just in all,
Free as the vital breeze or light of heaven,
Reveals the charms of nature.[e]

Love of dress: its baneful influence.—The Apostle Paul enjoins simplicity of dress upon Christian females, as that which becomes a professor of godliness. The Rev. Dr. Judson relates, during his early labours in Burmah, that he found the love of finery amongst the native females one of the great difficulties in the way of his success. The converts were, however, induced to make this as well as other sacrifices as an evidence of their love for Christ. Perhaps Christian females have not sufficiently regarded this subject in the light of a duty, or teachers considered the influence of their example upon their scholars. In the report of the Rev. J. P. Norris on schools inspected in Cheshire, Salop, and Staffordshire, in 1860, he expresses his satisfaction at noticing an improvement in the matter of dress, especially among the younger teachers. He remarks that the serious importance of simplicity in dress, on the part of schoolmistresses and their pupil-teachers, cannot be too earnestly impressed upon them. Such as the teacher is, such will her hundred scholars be, more or less. If she is dressy, they too will be dressy; but with this difference—she is dressy to please her fancy, they are dressy to their ruin. If a dressy teacher could see, with her mind's eye, all the consequences of her example, beginning with the admiring glance at her flounces or ribands, and then the pause before the shop window, the squandering of the hardly won or (it may be) ill-gotten sixpences and shillings, the awakened vanity, the courting of attention, the street flaunting and worse.—if all this could be brought before the young schoolmistress, as in a vision, she would understand the full meaning of these words, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Mr. Norris says he has wondered sometimes that school managers did not see the necessity of speaking to their teachers more plainly on the subject. These remarks, though addressed to female teachers, contain a truth equally applicable to male teachers.

23. **desire**, or mere wish. Set in contrast with the *expectation*, or strong confidence, of the wicked: as ch. x. 28. **only good**, wh., therefore, can only bring to him prosperity and blessing. **wrath**, that wrath of God wh. surely attends on all self-willed, violent, and wicked ways, however prosperous for the time they may seem.[a]

Meekness illustrated by the elder tree.—This timber is the softest, and can without difficulty be split, cut, and wrought, and yet experience proves that it does not rot in water. The greater part of the city of Venice stands upon piles of elder, which, sunk in the sea, form the foundation of massive buildings. It is the same with meek hearts. There is no better foundation for important undertakings of public or private utility, than that intelligent modesty which is gentle indeed, and ready to yield as far as a good conscience will allow, but which, nevertheless, lasts and continues stable in the flood of contradiction.[b]

e Matt. Henry.
d Dr. Thomas.
e Akenside.

"As a thief, by law burned in the forehead for theft, ought, so often as he looketh in a glass and perceiveth the scar thereof, to think upon and detest his inclination to that vice; so our garments, being as the scar in the forehead of our first parents and ourselves for their ambition, in that they sought to be like unto God, should, by the sight of them only, put us in mind to renounce all pride and ambition."—*Cawdray.*

"A celebrated old general used to dress in a fantastic manner by way of making himself better known. It is true, people would say, 'Who is that old fool?' but it is also true that the answer was, 'That is the famous general, who took such a place.'"—*Percy.*

a "This *v.* tells us what the desire and expectation of the wicked are, and how they will prove, what they *would* have, and what *they shall* have."—*Matt. Henry.*

Ps. x. 17, lxxiii. 25; Is. xxvi. 8; Ro. ii. 7—11.

v. 23. *J. Bunyan*, iii. 1771; *Zollikoffer*, i. 297.

b Gotthold.

24—26. (24) **scattereth**, in a good sense; makes "a generous distribution of benefactions." The figure is taken from the hand-sower. **increaseth**, by gaining spiritual good.[a] "There is a distribution that enricheth the soul of the distributor." **withholdeth . . meet**, is sparing, niggardly, and avaricious.[b] **poverty**, the miser's feeling of poverty; and poverty of God's true blessings, which alone make rich. (25) **liberal soul**, lit. *the soul of blessing*. **fat**,[c] "the sleek, well-filled look of health becomes the figure of prosperity." **watereth**, lit. *he that raineth shall himself become a river*.[d] (26) **withholdeth corn**, to force up the price.[e] **selleth it**, at a fair price.

Christian liberality (*v.* 25).—These words lead us to see—I. The spirit we should possess. 1. A spirit of liberality; 2. A spirit of benevolence. II. The benefits that will accrue to the possessor of it. 1. From the very exercise of the principle itself; 2. From the immediate agency of Almighty God. Hence we may clearly see—(1) From whence comes that leanness of which many complain; (2) What encouragement we have to proceed in the work before us.[f]

Reward of generosity.—Nearly half a century ago, when a coach ran daily between Glasgow and Greenock, by Paisley, on a forenoon, when a little past Bishopton, a lady in a coach noticed a boy walking barefooted, seemingly tired, and struggling with tender feet. She desired the coachman to take him up, give him a seat, and she would pay for it. When they arrived at the inn in Greenock, she inquired of the boy what was his object in coming there. He said he wished to be a sailor, and hoped some of the captains would engage him. She gave him half-a-crown, wished him success, and charged him to behave well. Twenty years after this, the coach returning to Glasgow in the afternoon on the same road, when near Bishoptou, a sea-captain observed an old lady on the road walking very slow, fatigued and weary. He desired the coachman to put her in the coach, as there was an empty seat, and he would pay for her. Immediately after, when changing horses at Bishopton, the passengers were sauntering about, except the captain and old lady, who remained in the coach. The lady thanked him for his kindly feeling towards her, as she was now unable to pay for a seat. He said he had always sympathy for weary pedestrians, since he himself was in that state when a boy, twenty years ago, near this very place, when a tender-hearted lady ordered the coachman to take him up and paid for his seat. "Well do I remember that incident," said she; "I am that lady, but my lot in life has changed. I was then independent; now I am reduced to poverty by the doings of a prodigal son." "How happy am I," said the captain, "that I have been successful in my enterprises, and am returning home to live on my fortune; and from this day I shall bind myself and heirs to supply you with twenty-five pounds per annum till your death.[g]—*Kindness remembered*.—Soon after the county of Lichfield, in America, began to be settled by the English, a strange Indian arrived at an inn, and asked the hostess, as the evening was advancing, to provide him some refreshment; at the same time observing that from failure in hunting he had nothing to pay, but promising compensation whenever he succeeded. The plea was, however, in vain: the hostess loaded him with oppro-

a "John Howard, when he grew sad about his piety, put on his hat, and went about among the poor. He came back a gainer."—*Miller*.

b "Avarice is an anomaly in the universe; all else gives out what it receives, but as a monster this clutches and retains."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

c Pr. xiii. 4, xxviii. 25; Ps. xxii. 29; Is. x. 16, xvii. 4; 2 Cor. ix. 6—11.

d "The water that falls in refreshing and fertilising irrigation is not lost, but becomes a fair stream, fringed with flowers, and overhung with trees. So the bounty of the liberal man, wh. rains down blessings, will flow on for ever in a beautiful river."—*Wordsworth*.

e Am. viii. 4—6.

f *C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 24. *Dr. J. Guyse*, 203; *Dr. J. Disney*, i. 315.

v. 26. *J. Downes*, ii. 239.

g *Whitecross*.

"Cast forth thy act, thy word, into the ever-living, ever-working universe: it is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed to-day, it will be found flourishing as a banyan grove, perhaps, alas, as a hemlock forest, after a thousand years."—*Carlyle*.

"The Hebrews have a saying,

brious epithets, and declared that it was not to throw away her earnings on such creatures as himself that she worked so hard. But as the Indian was about to retire, with a countenance expressive of severe suffering, a man who sat by directed the hostess to supply his wants, and promised her full remuneration. As soon as the Indian had finished his supper, he thanked his benefactor, assured him that he should remember his kindness, and engaged that it should be faithfully recompensed whenever it was in his power. For the present, he added, he could only reward him with a story, which, with the permission of the hostess, he wished to tell. This being given, from complacency in the prospect of payment, the Indian, having found that his benefactor read the Bible, thus proceeded: "Well, the Bible say, God made the world, and then He took him, and looked on him, and say, It's all very good! Then He made light, and took him, and looked on him, and say, It's all very good! Then He made dry land and water, and sun and moon, and grass and trees, and took him, and looked on him, and say, It's all very good! Then He made beasts, and birds, and fishes, and took him, and looked on him, and say, It's all very good! Then He made man, and took him, and looked on him, and say, It's all very good! Then He made woman, and took him, and looked on him, and He no say one such word." The feelings of the hostess, as the Indian now withdrew, may be easily imagined. The arrow which had been so acutely barbed could not fail to penetrate her bosom. "Acts of unkindness," says the proverb, "are like young birds; they always come home to roost." She had violated the law of benevolence, and deep mortification was one of the forms in which the penalty was to be paid. The spectator of her punishment had occasion, some years after, to go into the wilderness between Lichfield and Albany, where he was taken prisoner by an Indian scout, and carried to Canada. On his arrival at the principal settlement of the tribe, it was proposed by some of the captors that he should be put to death; but during the consultation an old woman demanded that he should be given up to her, that she might adopt him for a son who had been lost in the war. Accordingly he was given up to her, and he passed the succeeding winter in her family, amidst the usual circumstances of savage hospitality. While, in the course of the following summer, he was at work alone in the forest, an unknown Indian came and asked him to go to a place he pointed out, on a given day; and to this he agreed, though not without some apprehension that mischief was contemplated. His fears increased, his promise was broken; the same person repeated his visit, and after excusing himself in the best way he could, he made another engagement, and kept his word. On reaching the appointed spot he found the Indian provided with ammunition, two muskets, and two knapsacks; he was ordered to take one of each, and followed his conductor, under the conclusion that had he intended him injury, he might have despatched him at once. In the daytime they shot the game that came in their way, and at night they slept by the fire they had kindled; but the silence of the Indian as to the object of their expedition was mysterious and profound. After many days had thus passed, they came one morning to the top of an eminence, exhibiting a number of houses rising in the midst of a cultivated country. The Indian asked his companion if he

that God is more delighted in adverbs than in nouns; 'tis not so much the matter that's done, but the matter how 'tis done, that God minds. Not how much, but how well! 'Tis the well-doing that meets with a well-done. Let us therefore serve God not nominally or verbially, but adverbially."—*Venning.*

"As the sun never leaves off shining, though clouds sometimes obscure its light; so we must never cease to do well, even to our enemies and persecutors."—*Cawdray.*

"When thy hand hath done a good act, ask thy heart whether it was well done."—*Fuller.*

"The mountains are the most stable objects in the material world; nature's noblest emblem of immutability. But these have 'change' written upon their stupendous brows. Time is furrowing them with wrinkles—wearing down their colossal forms. Atmospheric influences are subjecting them to continual waste and decay. The hoary crowned Alp is included in the doom, 'All these things shall be dissolved.' But more enduring than mountains of primeval granite is God's kindness."—*H. W. Beecher.*

knew the ground, and he eagerly repeated, "It is Lichfield." His guide then recalled the scene at the inn some years before, and, bidding him farewell, exclaimed, "I that Indian! Now I pay you; go home!"[h]

h Dr. Dwight.

27. diligently, or early in the morning; the Eastern sign of diligence was rising early and setting about a thing earnestly. good, for others. favour, both from men and from God.[a] mischief, or the injury of others. it, viz., that wh. he desires and seeks for others.[b]

Good and evil (*v.* 27).—I. As objects of pursuit. 1. Some pursue good; 2. Some pursue evil. II. As sources of destiny. These pursuits bring different results to the soul. 1. The one procureth favour; 2. The other disfavour.[c]

Diligence.—A friend of mine, says Mr. Gurney, one day inquired of the then Lord Chancellor how he managed to get through so much business. "Oh," said his lordship, "I have three rules: the first is, I am a whole man to one thing at a time; the second is, I never lose a passing opportunity of doing anything that can be done; and the third is, I never entrust to other people what I ought to do myself."

a "Unconsciously striving after the favour which attends goodness."—*Spk. Com.*

Matt. vi. 33.

b Ps. vii. 14—16.

c Dr. Thomas.

v. 27. *A. Macdonald*, 221.

28. trusteth . . riches, wealth itself is not an evil, but trust in wealth rather than in God is the very essence of evil.[a] branch, or *leaf*.[b] "A fresh green leaf on a tree, in contrast with the withered falling leaf, to wh. the fool should rather be compared who trusts in his riches."[c]

Trusting in riches (*v.* 28).—I. Here is a common tendency. Wealth as an object of trust—1. Is spiritually unsatisfying: 2. Necessarily evanescent. II. Here is a terrible catastrophe. Shall fall! 1. Whence? 2. Whither? 3. When? 4. Why?[d]

Instability of human greatness.—How many sad illustrations does history supply of the passage we have just quoted! The Duke of Clarence, having offended his brother, Edward IV., was condemned, in 1478, on unjust pretences, and privately executed in the Tower. According to common report, he was drowned in a butt of wine. The king, when it was too late, felt the horrors of fratricide. When the nobles would sometimes plead for the pardon of some retainer condemned to suffer for his crimes, Edward would recall the death of Clarence, and exclaim, "Oh, unhappy brother, no one would speak for you!"

a Pr. x. 15; Ps. xlix. 6; 1 Ti. vi. 17.

b Ps. i. 3, xcii. 12; Je. xvii. 8.

c Zöckler.

"When those who take root in the world wither, those that are grafted into Christ and partake of His root and fatness shall be fruitful and flourishing."—*Matt. Henry.*

d Dr. Thomas.

29. troubleth, with niggardly and worrying ways: by his greediness for gain. the wind, used as the type of disappointment and dissatisfaction. No gains are of any value if to win them we sacrifice the peace and joy of our *home*.[a] servant, he so ruins his own mind by his evil ways that he becomes, as a slave, dependent on those who have understanding.

Family life (*v.* 29).—The words imply three things. I. That peace should be the grand aim of all the members of the domestic circle. II. That there are some members who break the peace of their domestic circle. III. That those who break the peace of their domestic circle are fools. 1. They get no good by it; 2. They get degradation by it.[b]

A home-troubler.—"I called," said a minister, "some time ago to see a mother. She was in distress: she not only wept, but wept aloud. 'What is the matter?' I inquired. 'O, my child,' and she wept again—'O, my child is committed to prison,' and

a "Home is the one place where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness wh. the world forces us to wear in self-defence, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of ten-

again she wept,—'O, my child is just committed to prison, and I fear he will never, never return to his father's house;' and she wept again, and with all my firmness I could not forbear weeping too. I was afraid to ask the cause. I did not need, for she said, 'O that theatre! he was a virtuous, kind youth, till that theatre proved his ruin.' This was her testimony—it was the young man's also." "One theatre," said a learned and observant judge, "destroys more souls than fifty churches can save."[c]

30, 31. (30) **fruit**, that wh. the righteous man says and does; the result of his moral integrity.[a] **tree of life**, a growth fr. wh. there springs forth life for many. **winneth**, *etc.*, better, "A wise man winneth souls."[b] (31) **recompensed**, with just, Divine recognition of their failings and sins. "The righteous is punished for his lesser sins, or as a discipline; much more the wicked."[c]

A word to winners of souls (*v.* 30).—I. For he has a blessing in the winning. 1. The best way to keep our own souls in health is to seek those of others: 2. The best way to benefit our brethren is to seek souls. II. For he has a blessing in the won. 1. Every soul we win for Christ is a token of His favour; 2. Causes, or should cause, more watchfulness; 3. Is an additional helper for us. III. For he has a blessing stored up in heaven. 1. Exalted position—"shine as the stars;" 2. Perpetual preferment—"for ever and ever;" 3. Unbounded delight.[d]

Winning souls.—The following is language held by a colporteur of the American Tract Society, in Florida:—A colporteur must count the cost, admonished by Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Bodily strength and vigour of health are prerequisites. He must be willing to abide with the poorest and most ignorant of our fellow-men, and be content with the humblest fare; cheerfully endure cold and heat, hunger and thirst, labour and fatigue, if souls may be benefited and the kingdom of our Redeemer promoted. Above all, he needs an entire reliance on the Divine aid and guidance, and must have his own heart subdued by the Spirit of God. Though I have sunk in the bogs, and have extricated myself only by excessive labour; have broken down in the midst of a difficult stream, in the sickly and hot season, and waded out with my boxes of books; have been lost two days in the woods without food for myself or horse; have lain in the wild forest, far from any habitation, while the storm was raging about me, or only the howling of wolves and of other wild beasts was heard; yet these trials of hunger, thirst, and exposure are of little account if I can but win souls to Christ."[e]

derness gush out without any sense of awkwardness, and without any fear of ridicule."—*F. W. Robertson.*

b Dr. Thomas.

c Whitecross.

a "The fruit of a life is the involuntary and regular expression of what the man is in heart and soul."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Da. xii. 3; Ja. v. 19, 20; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 22, 23.

c 1 Pe. iv. 18.

"God would have us read our sins in our judgments, that we might both repent of our sins, and give glory to His justice."—*Bp. Hall.*

d Stems and Twigs.

v. 30. *H. Wilkinson*, i. 49; *J. Alliene, Rem.* 47; *J. Craig*, i. 384; *J. Benson*, i. 150; *J. Newton*, v. 191; *E. Bather*, iii. 530.

v. 31. *P. Pyle*, ii. 530; *Syd. Smith*, 154; *W. Nind*, i. 285.

e Cheever.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1. **instruction**, in the wider sense of discipline, wh. comes through the providences and experiences of life. **knowledge**, the practical knowledge that enables a man to guide his life aright. **reproof**, wh. comes so surely in the providential dealings of God. **brutish**, incapable of being influenced by reason and experience.[a]

a "The difference bet. man and brute lies chiefly in the capacity of the former for progress and improvement, and that capacity de-

pends upon his willingness to submit to discipline and education."—*Spk. Com.* Ps. xlix. 10, lxxiii. 22, xcii. 6; Pr. xxx. 2.

"Those that desire to live in loose families and societies, where they may be under no check, that stifle the convictions of their own consciences, and count those their enemies who tell them the truth, are the *brutish* here meant."—*Matt. Henry.*

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 2. *P. Skelton*, iii. 272; *Dr. S. Johnson*, i. 121.

a Ps. i. 3, xv. 5; Je. xvii. 8.

"'Tis Nature's law that none, the meauest of created things, of forms created the most vile and brute, the dullest or most noxious, should exist divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good, a life and soul to every mode of being inseparably linked."—*Wordsworth.*

b American Mag.

a Ru. iii. 11; Pr. xxxii. 16.

b "Lit. a worm-eating, *i.e.* a ruin inwardly undermining and slowly destroying."—*O. Zöckler.*

c Dr. Thomas.

A virtuous woman is a source of honour to her husband; a vicious one causes him disgrace.

Good and evil (*v.* 1).—Good and evil are presented in three aspects. I. In relation to intelligence. 1. The good loves instruction; 2. The evil hates intelligence. II. In relation to Divine judgment. 1. The good secures the favour of God: 2. The evil incurs condemnation. III. In relation to their standing. 1. The evil have no stability; 2. The good are firmly established.[b]

Note on prudence and rectitude.—Rectitude—from the Latin word *rectus*, right, straight. Prudence—wisdom applied to practice. Prudence is principally in reference to actions to be done, and due means, order, season, and method of doing or not doing. Pliny reported of one Oresianus, who from a little piece of ground got much wealth, and more than his neighbours could from a great quantity, whereupon he was accused of witchcraft; but to defend himself he brought forward his servants and instruments of labour on the day of trial, and said. "These, O Romans, are all my witchcrafts; I say not to my servants, 'Go and do this,' but 'Come, let us do this and that,' and so the work goeth on. The keys that men keep in their pockets and use every day, wax brighter and brighter; but if they be laid aside and hung by the walls they soon grow rusty."

2, 3. (2) **obtaineth**, or *draws out.* **man . . devices**, the Heb. has no word for wicked. It means "the man of plots;" perhaps suggesting the man of mere intellect without goodness. (3) **established**, set firm. The apparent prosperity of the wicked became a sore puzzle oftentimes to the righteous, so they needed such an assurance as this. **root**, representing the righteous as a firmly-established tree.[a] Comp. our Lord's fig. Matt. vii. 24—27.

Guided by integrity.—A company of boys in ——— Street, Boston, one day after school, were engaged in snowballing. William had made a good hard snowball. In throwing it he "put in too much powder," as the boys say—he threw it too hard—and it went further than he intended, right through a parlour window. All the boys shouted: "There, you'll catch it now. Run, Bill, run!" They then took to their heels. But the brave William straightened up and looked sober, as he said, "I shall not run." He then started directly for the house where the window had been broken. He rang at the door, acknowledged what he had done, and expressed his regret. He then gave his name, and the name of his father, and his father's place of business, and said the injury should be repaired.[b]

4. **virtuous woman**, not merely a chaste woman, but one in whom is strength of character: a woman of power;[a] **a** capable woman: one in whom her husband can fully trust. **crown**, or garland; the emblem of honour and renown, of gladness and of joy. Her care and wise ruling in the house crown him with prosperity and happiness. **maketh ashamed**, by incompetency or self-indulgence. **rottenness**, *etc.*,[b] bec. no prosperities can endure wastefulness in the home.

The queen of the household (*v.* 4).—In that—I. She exercises a control over him—crown the insignia of rule. II. That she confers a dignity upon him—a crown is a dignity. 1. Her excellence justifies his choice: 2. Her management enriches his exchequer; 3. Her influence exalts his character.[c]

The household queen.—

Eyes not down-dropp'd, nor over bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity :
. . Locks not wide dispread,
Madonna-wise, on either side her head ;
Sweet lips, whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihood.
. . . . . .
A courage to endure and to obey—
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, through all her placid life,
The queen of marriage—a most perfect wife.[d]

Woman's voice.—

Not in the swaying of the summer trees,
When evening breezes sing their vesper hymn—
Not in the minstrel's mighty symphonies,
Nor ripples breaking on the river's brim,
Is earth's best music ; these may have awhile
High thoughts in happy hearts, and carking cares beguile.

But even as the swallow's silken wings,
Skimming the water of the sleeping lake,
Stir the still silver with a hundred rings—
So doth one sound the sleeping spirit wake
To brave the danger, and to bear the harm—
A low and gentle voice—dear woman's chiefest charm.

An excellent thing it is ! and ever lent
To truth and love, and meekness ; they who own
This gift, by the all-gracious Giver sent,
Ever by quiet step and smile are known ;
By kind eyes that have wept, hearts that have sorrow'd—
By patience never tired, from their own trials borrow'd.

An excellent thing it is when first in gladness
A mother looks into her infant's eyes—
Smiles to its smiles, and saddens to its sadness—
Pales at its paleness, sorrows at its cries ;
Its food and sleep, and smiles, and little joys—
All these come ever blent with one low gentle voice.

An excellent thing it is when life is leaving—
Leaving with gloom and gladness, joys and cares—
The strong heart failing, and the high soul grieving
With strangest thoughts, and wild unwonted fears ;
Then, then a woman's low soft sympathy
Comes like an angel's voice to teach us how to die.

But a most excellent thing it is in youth,
When the fond lover hears the loved one's tone,
That fears, but longs, to syllable the truth—
How their two hearts are one, and she his own ;
It makes sweet human music—Oh ! the spells
That haunt the trembling tale a bright-eyed maiden tells ![e]

v. 4. *R. Snawsel*, i. 163.

[d] *Tennyson.*

"The very first of human life must spring from woman's breast ; your first small words are taught you from her lips ; your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs too often breathed out in a woman's hearing, when men have shrunk from the ignoble care of watching the last hour of him who led them."—*Lord Byron.*

"Oh, woman! that some one of you will take an everlasting pen into your hands, and grave in paper (which the writ shall make more lasting than the marble monuments) your matchless virtues to posterities ; which the defective race of envious man strives to conceal!"—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

"*Ill-temper in woman.*—Fie, fie! unknit that threat'ning unkind brow ; and dart not scornful glances from those eyes, to wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor ; it blots thy beauty, as frosts bite the meads ; confounds thy fame, as whirlwinds shake fair buds ; and in no sense is meet, or amiable."—*Shakespeare.*

[e] *Edwin Arnold.*

5—7. (5) **thoughts**, or purposes.[a] **right**, aim at simple justice and righteousness. "Habits of good and evil reach beyond the region of outward act to that of impulse and volition."[b] **counsels**, or deliberate plans, contrasted with casual thoughts of the righteous. **deceit**, not truth, or righteousness, or charity. (6) **words**, or expressed designs. **for blood**, ch. i. 11, 18. **deliver them**, either the righteous themselves, or those whom they defend from the wicked. (7) **overthrown**, Ps. xxxvii. 34—36.

Moral contrasts (*vv.* 5—7).—I. Thought. If the thought of the righteous is right, his words and actions will correspond. If the counsels of the wicked are deceit, what must his thought have been? II. Word. The deceitful words of wickedness are to lure men to destruction, but the plain and honest speech of truth is to extricate men from the snare of the wicked. III. Destiny. The wicked are overthrown in position and the reputation of man and God, while the righteous will be secure.

A Sunday scholar.—Little Jane was a Sunday scholar whom every one of her Christian friends loved. Whatever seat was vacant at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning, hers was always filled. She was so poor that potatoes and bread constituted her only sustenance, while she was the victim of a severe and wasting ague. She called on her teacher one Monday, who saw traces of disease, hunger, and exhaustion in her expressive countenance, and forced some nutritious food upon her. Jane retired into a corner, and hastily ate one half only of this opportune luxury; the other half was stealthily committed to her empty pocket. The action did not escape the keen eye of her teacher. "Jane, my dear," said the teacher, "what are you saving it for? I am sure you can eat it all." The little invalid looked confused, as she answered, "It is for my brother Tommy; he has got the ague too."[c]

8, 9. (8) **according to**, *lit.* at the mouth, or direction of. In exact proportion to. **wisdom**, or practical shrewdness. **perverse heart**, *lit.* the crooked in heart. "The perverse man, who does not see things as they are, and therefore acts perversely and injudiciously."[a] **be despised**, or *come to shame*. (9) **hath a servant**, or *is a servant to himself*, sets to work to earn, is willing to labour. **honoureth himself**, with the foolish idea that labour is ignoble, and so lets his hands hang idle.[b] A hit at the impoverished pride of birth.

The basis of reputation (*v.* 8).—I. Hollow praise is sometimes given to men for other things—as knowledge, title, accidental good fortune. II. True praise is based on wisdom, because when rightly understood it denotes moral qualities of a high order. The wise man is humble, charitable, sagacious, God-fearing.

Power of knowledge and force of example.—One day, in the year 1814, a workman hurried into Stephenson's cottage with the startling information that the deepest main of the colliery was on fire! He immediately hastened to the pit-head, about a hundred yards off, whither the women and children of the colliery were running, with wildness and terror depicted in every face. In a commanding voice Stephenson ordered the engineman to lower him down the shaft in the corve. There was danger, it might be death, before him, but he must go. He was soon at the bottom, and in the midst of the men, who were

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a "Upon the regulation of our thoughts depends the regulation of our lives. To think well is the way to act rightly."—*Paley.*

b Spk. Com.

"Thoughts are the most wonderful things in connection with human life. They are the factors of character, and the primal forces of history. By thought man builds up his own world, and it is ever to him the realest world."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"So spake the cherub, and his grave rebuke, severe in youthful beauty, added grace invincible: abash'd the devil stood, and felt how awful goodness is."—*Milton.*

c R. T. S.

a Hitzig.

b "Better is he that laboureth, and aboundeth in all things, than he that boasteth himself and wanteth bread."—*Wordsworth.*

"Respectable mediocrity is better than boastful poverty."—*Spk. Com.*

"That man is to be accounted poor, of whatever rank he be, and suffers the pains of poverty, whose expenses exceed his resources; and no man is, properly speaking, poor, but he."—*Paley.*

paralysed at the danger which threatened the lives of all in the pit. Leaping from the corve on its touching the ground, he called out, "Are there six men among you who have the courage to follow me? If so, come, and we will put the fire out." The Killingworth pitmen had the most perfect confidence in their engine-wright, and they readily volunteered to follow him. Silence succeeded the frantic tumult of the previous minute, and the men set to work with a will. In every mine, bricks, mortar, and tools enough are at hand, and by Stephenson's direction the materials were forthwith carried to the required spot, where, in a very short time, a wall was raised at the entrance to the main, he himself taking the most active part in the work. The atmospheric air was by this means excluded, the fire was extinguished, most of the people in the pit were saved from death, and the mine was preserved.[c]

10. **regardeth,** knoweth. "All true sympathy and care must grow out of knowledge. The righteous man tries to *know* the feelings and life even of the brute beast, and so comes to care for it."[a] **his beast,** esp. the animal that in any way renders him service.[b] **tender mercies,** or *bowels*. The reference is prob. to the action of the wicked towards their fellow-men; and the contrast intended may be thus expressed: "The righteous more regards a beast than the wicked a man."[c]

Duty to animals (*v.* 10).—I. Consider the relation of man to the lower creatures. He is their lord, ruler—not torturer. They are to minister to his need, not to the violence of his passions or vicious curiosity. A word on vivisection. II. Out of this consideration will grow a proper regard for the life of dumb creatures. Animals kept for use will be cared for, properly fed, not overtasked. The enforced confinement of pet animals should be compensated by kind treatment. III. A proper regard for the lower animals would very much affect what is called sport. Christian legislation has already abolished many of the pastimes that involved cruelty to animals, and inscribed on the statute book laws against such cruelty. IV. Disregard is the evidence of a brutal mind, and degrades man to the level of beasts of prey.

Cruel drivers.—He very often mingled with affairs in the street as he passed along. One day, when he saw a man beating his horse brutally, he stepped up to him and said very seriously, "Dost thou know that some people think men change into animals when they die?" The stranger's attention was arrested by such an unexpected question, and he answered that he never was acquainted with anybody who had that belief. "But some people do believe it," rejoined Friend Hopper; "and they also believe that animals may become men. Now I am thinking if thou shouldest ever be a horse, and that horse should ever be a man with such a temper as thine, the chance is thou wilt get some cruel beatings." Having thus changed the current of his angry mood, he proceeded to expostulate with him in a friendly way, and the poor beast was reprieved, for that time at least.[d]

11. **tilleth his land,** with foresight and diligence. **satisfied,** with the sure rewards of his toil. **vain persons,**[a] those who have no need of toil, and have others as servants or retainers dependent on them. The lot of such retainers is

"Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which after the first and second blow may be drawn with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood."—*Augustine.*

c Smiles' Life of Stephenson.

a Spk. Com. Ge. xxxiii. 13, 14.

b "God put all under the dominion of man: some to serve him in one way, and some in another; some to charm his eye with their beauty, others to delight his ear with their music; some to supply him with food, others with clothing; some to save his own muscular strength in doing his work, and others to bear him about."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

c Fausset.

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel *even to men.*"—*Wordsworth.*

v. 10. *P. Stockdale,* 85; *R. Mayow,* 55; *Dr. D. Cresswell,* 195; *Dr. T. Chalmers,* xi. 247.

d Life of I. T. Hopper.

a Zöckler prefers, with *Umbreit, Bertheau,* etc., to translate *vain things,* vani-

ties and idlenesses.

here indicated.[b] "Idleness leads to worse evil than that of hunger."

Industry and idleness (*v.* 11).—I. Every one has something, if not land, that he may till. II. The industrious toiler will have at least bread. III. The results of honest toil will be satisfying. IV. If one has understanding he will not follow the empty, but will rather seek to lead them in a more excellent way.

Earl of Chatham.—The celebrated Earl of Chatham performed an amount of business, even minute, which filled common improvers of time with astonishment. He knew not merely the great outlines of public business, the policy and intrigues of foreign courts, but his eye was on every part of the British dominions, and scarcely a man could move without his knowledge of the man and of his object. A friend one day called on him when Premier of England, and found him down on his hands and knees, playing at marbles with his little boy, and complaining bitterly that the rogue would not play fair, gaily adding, "that he must have been corrupted by the example of the French." The friend wished to mention a suspicious-looking stranger, who for some time had taken up lodgings in London. Was he a spy, or merely a private gentleman? Chatham went to his drawer, and took out some scores of small portraits, and holding up one which he had selected, asked, "Is that the man?" "Yes, the very person." "Oh! I have had my eye on him from the moment he stepped on shore." All this was accomplished by a rigid observance of time, never suffering a moment to pass without pressing it into service.

[b] Man should not eat of honey like a drone from others, labours.

[a] He did not seclude himself into the constant retirements of a cloister, nor into the further recesses of a wilderness (as some others have done), but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men—even the most contemptible and odious sort of men, publicans and sinners; like the sun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all."—*Barrow.*

12, 13. (12) **desireth the net,** a difficult expression. "The wicked desireth the spoil of evil doers."[a] "The wicked longs for the prey of evil men."[b] The marg. gives another word for *net*, viz., *fortress.* **root,** the part wh. is fixed and stable; the firm principles and rootings in righteousness. **fruit,** the word *safety* or security would appear to afford a more precise contrast. (13) **is snared,** or is himself snared by the evil speaking with wh. he seeks to overthrow others. Lies are the language of the crafty. **come out of,** if he may get into trouble, truth, integrity, and uprightness will ensure deliverance sooner or later.

[a] Zöckler.

[b] Miller.

Ensnaring words (*v.* 13).—The words of the text are found to be true—I. When the liar contradicts a previous statement. II. When the calumnious unintentionally reveal their malicious motive. III. When the sophistical are tested by a rigid logic, or an appeal to facts.

[c] The meaning is, the wicked desire to be as apt in all the stratagems by wh. advantage is taken of others as the most cunning of evil men."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Abd-el-Kadir and the robbers.—Abd-el-Kadir, of Ghilau, having obtained permission from his mother to go to Bagdad and devote himself to the service of God, thus describes her parting counsels, and records an incident in his early career which beautifully illustrates the power of truth. "She wept, then taking out eighty dinars, she told me that as I had a brother, half of that was all my inheritance. She made me promise when she gave it to me that I would never tell a lie, and afterwards bade me farewell, exclaiming, 'Go, my son, I consign thee to God; we shall not meet again till the day of judgment.' I went on well till I came near to Hamadôm, when our kâfilah was plundered by sixty horsemen. One fellow asked me what I had got. 'Forty dinars,' said I, 'are sewed under my garments.' He laughed, thinking, no doubt, I was joking with him. 'What

[d] The net of evil men is that in wh. they are taken, the judgment of God in wh. they are ensnared. This they run into with such a blind infatuation that it seems as if they were in love with their own destruction."—*Spk. Com.*

have you got?' said another. I gave him the same answer. When they were dividing the spoil, I was called by the chief. 'What property have you got, my little fellow?' said he. 'I have told two of your people already,' I replied: 'I have forty dinars sewed up carefully in my clothes.' He ordered them to be ripped open, and found my money. 'And how came you,' said he, with surprise, 'to declare so openly what has been so carefully hidden?' 'Because,' I replied, 'I will not be false to my mother, to whom I have promised that I will never tell a lie!' 'Child,' said the robber, 'hast thou such a sense of thy duty to thy mother at thy years, and am I insensible at my age of the duty I owe to my God? Give me thy hand, innocent boy,' he continued, 'that I may swear repentance upon it.' He did so. His followers were all alike struck with the scene. 'You have been our leader in our guilt,' said they to their chief, 'be the same in the path of virtue;' and they instantly, at his order, made restitution of their spoil, and vowed repentance on my hand."

"Out of the 50,000 words or so in the English tongue it has been found that a rustic labourer only uses 300. An ordinarily educated man is supposed to use 3,000 or 4,000, while a great orator reaches 10,000. The Old Testament contains 5,642 different words, and the works of Shakespeare about 15,000; those of Milton about 8,000."—*Prof. Müller.*

14. **fruit of his mouth,** *i.e.* rational and benevolent discourse. **recompense,** *etc.*, retributive law surely governs the universe.[a] **hands,** a man's works are the fruit of his hands, as his words are the fruit of his lips. Both good words and good works return upon a man in blessings.

Retributions of lip and life (*v.* 14).—I. The retributions of the lip. Good speech is—1. Sincere; 2. Truthful; 3. Benevolent. Such speech satisfies—(1) In its action on its own mind; (2) In the effect he sees produced on others; (3) In the conscious approbation of God. II. The retributions of the life. This is inevitable—1. From the law of causation; 2. From the law of conscience; 3. From the law of righteousness.[b]

Reward of benevolence sometimes immediate.—Occasionally a benevolent action wrought in faith brings with it an instantaneous recompense in kind; therein Providence is seen as smiling upon the deed. The late John Andrew Jones, a poor Baptist minister, whilst walking in Cheapside, was appealed to by some one he knew for help. He had but a shilling in the world, and poised it in his mind, to give or not to give. The greater distress of his acquaintance prevailed, and he gave his all, walking away with a sweet remembrance of the promise, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will He pay him again." He had not gone a hundred yards further before he met a gentleman who said, "Ah, Mr. Jones, I am glad to see you. I have had this sovereign in my waistcoat pocket this week past for some poor minister, and you may as well have it." Mr. Jones was wont to add, when telling the story, "If I had not stopped to give relief I should have missed the gentleman and the sovereign too."[c]

a Ga. vi. 7, 8; Ro. ii. 6.

Mal. iii. 16, 17; Ja. iii. 13.

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 14. *A. Farindon*, i. 81.

"The kindness of some is too much like an echo; it returns exactly the counterpart of what it receives, and neither more nor less (Matt. v. 46, 47)."—*G. S. Bowes.*

c C. H. Spurgeon.

15, 16. (15) **fool,** here the self-willed as well as the thoughtless. **right . . eyes,** *i.e.* he takes no advice, but with self-confidence follows on his own wilful way.[a] **counsel,** from those who have wisdom and experience.[b] The wise man is ever a willing listener to wise counsels. "He is a fool that is governed by his eye, and not by his conscience. He is wise whose ear is always open to good advice."[a] (16) **presently,** very soon: because he has

a He who knows nothing doubts nothing.

b "The first step in knowledge is to know that we are ignorant."—*Cecil.*

not character and self-command enough to restrain his wrath. covereth shame, or hasty anger that might bring shame.[d]

The way of the fool (*v.* 15).—I. Right in his own eyes, because, being a fool, he is ignorant of better ways. II. Being a fool he is too proud to acknowledge what he may see to be good in the ways of others. III. Although right in his own eyes, it is wrong in the sight of others,—the good and wise, and God. Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve.

A parable of folly.—Hazael, the son of an Eastern prince, had been educated in the valley of the wise men, and had passed there the days of his boyhood. Then his father sent him to Persia to finish his education, and to learn the ways and manners of men. Perfect liberty was granted to the youth; but Serujah, his old master, secretly watched the life and doings of the prince. When he arrived in Persia, he was led away by the pleasures of the capital and the turmoil of luxurious life: so that he forgot his destination, and thoughtlessly gave up his heart to pleasure: he remembered no longer his royal calling. When he was one day walking in the pleasure-gardens of Ispahan, Serujah passed him in the garb of a pilgrim, having a staff in his right hand. But Hazael knew Serujah, and asked him, "Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?" Serujah answered, and said, "I know not." Then the youth marvelled, and said, "Hast thou left thy home, and dost thou travel abroad not knowing whither?" Serujah answered, "I have forgotten it: I walk to and fro; and the path which seems to me the widest and the most pleasant, that choose I." "And whither will such bootless wanderings lead thee?" asked the astonished youth. Serujah answered, "I know not: why should I care?" Then Hazael turned to those who stood around him, and said, "This man was the teacher of my youth, and full of wisdom; but, behold! he has grown foolish, and lacks understanding. Alas! how is he changed, and become like another being!" Then Serujah threw down his wallet, and went to the youth, and said, "Thou sayest it, Hazael, my life has changed like thine. Formerly, I was thy guide, and thou didst follow me in the way which I showed thee. But now I have ceased to be thy guide; I have begun to follow thee. Behold my wandering! wherein I lose sight of the way, and the goal is like thine: reason has departed from thee, even as it has quitted me. Who is the more foolish, thou or I? and which of us is wandering in the worse path?" Thus said Serujah. Then Hazael acknowledged his transgression, and returned to the way of wisdom, which Serujah had taught him.[e]

17—19. (17) truth, strict absolute truth, without concealment or deception. The point in this verse is the "inseparable union bet. truth and justice. The end does not justify the means, and only he who breathes and utters truth makes the righteous cause clear."[a] false witness, in a court of justice. (18) piercings, *etc.*,[b] Ps. lvii. 4. lix. 7. Inconsiderate and inappropriate words are like knife-thrusts, persons feel cut and wounded by them. health, or bringeth healing.[c] Wounding thrusts, and tender healings are forcibly contrasted. (19) for ever, it will abide all testings. for a moment, lit. *till I wink again.*

Homiletic hints (*v.* 17).—Connection between truth and righteousness. Lovers of truth set forth righteousness of God, and vindicate righteousness of life: such show forth righteousness

c Mat. Henry.

d "He is slow to denounce his insulters."—*Fausset.*

When Dr. Swift was arguing one day, with great coolness, with a gentleman who had become exceedingly warm in the dispute, one of the company asked him how he could keep his temper so well. "The reason is," replied the Dean, "I have truth on my side."

v. 15. *J. Balguy,* i. 167.

v. 16. *Syd. Smith,* ii. 409.

"The greatest of fools is he who imposes on himself, and in his greatest concern thinks certainly he knows that which he has least studied, and of which he is most profoundly ignorant."—*Shaftesbury.*

"Surely he is not a fool that hath unwise thoughts, but he that utters them."—*Bishop Hall.*

e Krummacher.

a Spk. Com.

b "The edge of a sword is called its mouth in Heb. (Ex. xvii. 13; Nu. xxi. 24.) The tongue of the wise is contrasted with the mouth of the sword brandished by the slanderer."—*Wordsworth.*

c "We should make conscience

in the measure and time of the truth spoken.—(*v.* 18).—The piercings of a sword are wounding, irritating, often at random, often mortal. Health of the wise tongue is seen in the joy, the cheerfulness, the content, good living, which it encourages or produces.

Truthfulness of Washington.—When Washington, the late President of the United States of America, was about six years of age, some one made him a present of a hatchet. Highly pleased with his weapon, he went about chopping everything that came in his way; and going into the garden, he unluckily tried its edge on an English cherry tree, stripping it of its bark, and leaving little hope of its recovery. The next morning, when his father saw the tree, which was a great favourite, he inquired who had done the mischief, declaring he would not have taken five guineas for it; but no one could inform him of the offender. At length, however, came George, with the hatchet in his hand, into the place where the father was, who immediately suspected him to be the culprit. "George," said the old gentleman, "do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?" The child hesitated for a moment, and then nobly said, "I cannot tell a lie, papa,—you know that I cannot tell a lie,—I did cut it with the hatchet." "Run to my arms. Glad am I, George, that you have killed my tree—you have paid me for it a thousand-fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is of more worth than a thousand cherry trees, though blossoming with silver, and their fruits of gold."[d]

of truth, not only in our words, but in all our actions; because those that deal truly and sincerely in all their dealings are His delight, and He is well pleased with them. We delight to converse with, and make use of, those that are honest, and that we may put a confidence in, such therefore let us be, that we may recommend ourselves to the favour both of God and man."—*An Old Author.*

v. 19. *M. A. Meilan*, i. 161.

d Whitecross.

20, 21. (20) **in the heart,** it is no surface-matter. They are corrupt at the root. **joy,** at heart. Their counsels of peace spring out of the glad and peaceful heart. (21) **no evil,**[a] no unmitigated or unsanctified evil: nothing *worthless* to him. **mischief,** calamity and distress.

Immunity from evil (*v.* 21).—I. This seems not to be true: the same event happeneth alike to all; the best of men sometimes suffer. II. But it is true, it will be remembered, that because he is a just man he will regard as a good for him that which to others seems evil: for him the curse is turned into a blessing—for him poverty and sickness, etc., are blessings in disguise.

a Ps. xci. 10.

v. 20. *Dr. T. Taylor*, 523.

v. 21. *Dr. N. Brady*, ii. 273; *R. Duke*, 187; *W. Draper*, 21.

22. **abomination,** *etc.*, this takes the higher view: the evil of deceitful speech has already been shown, now God's view of it is declared.[a] **deal truly,** *i.e.* faithfully, according to promises.

Truth.—Park, in his travels through Africa, relates that a party of armed Moors, having made a predatory attack on the flocks of a village at which he was stopping, a youth of the place was mortally wounded in the affray. The natives placed him on horseback, and conducted him home; while his mother preceded the mournful group, proclaiming all the excellent qualities of her boy, and by her clasped hands and streaming eyes manifested the inward bitterness of her soul. The quality for which she chiefly praised the boy, formed by itself an epitaph so noble, that even civilised life could not aspire to a higher. "He never," said she, with pathetic energy, "never, never told a lie!"[b]

a Pr. vi. 16—19; Jno. iii. 20, 21.

v. 22. *Dr. R. South*, i. 494; *Abp. Secker.*

v. 135. *F. Goode*, 308.

b R. T. S.

23, **concealeth,** *comp. v.* 16. A wise man is not too ready to talk: he would rather think on, and seek to know more perfectly. Those who know but little are always eager to make the most of their little stock. The truly learned are usually modest and

a "Knowing men, if they be prudent men, will carefully avoid everything that savours of

ostentation, and not take all occasions to show their learning and reading, but only to use it for good purposes, and then let their own works praise them."—*Mat. Henry.*

Pr. xv 2; Ec. iii. 7; Am. v. 13.

b Stems and Twigs.

c Young.

retiring.[a] proclaimeth, by rushing in at every opportunity they surely proclaim the limit of their knowledge.

Concealing knowledge (*v.* 23).—A prudent man concealeth knowledge—I. When it is inopportune, John xvi. 12. II. Or above the capacity of his hearers, 1 Cor. ii. 2. III. Or likely to be misapplied, Mark xv. 5. IV. When sure of rejection, Matt. vii. 6. V. When calculated to injure the brethren, Lev. xix. 16. VI. When to utter it would be only for self-display, Prov. xxvii. 2.[b]

Solemn fools.—

What's the bent brow, or neck in thought reclined?
The body's wisdom to conceal the mind.
A man of sense can artifice disdain,
As men of wealth may venture to go plain;
And be this truth eternal ne'er forgot—
Solemnity's a cover for a sot.
I find the fool when I behold the screen;
For 'tis the wise man's interest to be seen.[c]

24—26. (24) bear rule, the rewards of diligence will set men in positions of independence and authority. render tribute, will be forced to labour, or to serve, as one owing tribute. "The slothful inevitably descend to pauperism and servitude." (25) heaviness, or trouble. maketh it stoop, a difficult expression. Some trans. *he makes it stoop*, or crushes it down. But the idea may well be, it depresses him, makes him unfit for work.[a] a good word, cheery, comforting word. (26) more excellent, better trans. "guideth his friend aright." Luther and some others trans. "better than his friend fares the righteous man." seduceth them, leadeth his friends astray, or bringeth himself to ruin.

The excellency of the righteous (*v.* 26).—I. In his connections. 1. He is united to Christ; 2. The Holy Ghost dwells in him; 3. He is of the same family with all the glorified saints and angels; 4. What does any worldly man possess that can be compared with this? II. In His principles. 1. He is under the influence of faith and love: 2. How different the principles of the wicked! III. In his habits. 1. He lives for God: 2. How is it for the wicked? IV. In his end. Address—1. Those whom God has classed with the wicked; 2. Those who are disposed to class themselves with the righteous.[b]

Flowery speech.—A distinguished preacher was once asked what he thought of a sermon which he had just heard delivered, and which had appeared to produce a great sensation among the congregation. His reply may suggest an important hint to some Christian ministers:—"Very fine, sir; but a man cannot live upon flowers."[c]

27, 28. (27) roasteth, so as to get for himself the benefit of his own labours, he lets them slip from him. He does not improve his advantages.[a] substance, *etc.*, better rend. "But a precious treasure to a man is diligence," or "But precious treasure belongeth to the diligent man," intimating that he makes effort to hold it securely when it is gained. (28) pathway, *etc.*, this sentence needs to be reconstructed, so as to throw out the designed contrast. The word rendered *pathway*, properly means a crooked, winding by-path; and the clause should be rendered, "But a devious way (leadeth) to death." The negative *no* in Heb. is so

a We should watch against giving way to grief, lest it unfit us for duty.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

Honours come by diligence; riches spring from economy.

v. 25. *Bp. Abernethy, A Christian Treatise*, 343.

v. 26. *H. Scougal*, 74; *W. Dunlop*, i. 89; *Dr. J. Rogers*, iii. 355; *Dr. J. Orr*, v. 35; *T. Bissett*, 332; *J. Logan*, 346.

Hard words are like hailstones in summer, beating down and destroying what they would nourish were they melted into drops.

c R. T. S.

a He will let whatever he may gain slip from his hands for want of effort and attention.

v. 27. *P. Stockdale*, 179.

v. 28. *J. Duchal*, 38; *T. Hawies*, 301.

like the preposition *to* that we find them on several occasions confused with each other.[b]

Life in the way of righteousness (*v.* 28).—I. The righteous are they who—1. Are interested by faith in the righteousness of Christ; 2. Who are distinguished by the integrity of their principles; 3. Who live in the exercise of communion with God; 4. Such are animated by a new life; 5. This life in the soul shall never be extinguished. Apply:—(1) Are we of the number of the righteous? (2) If not, the reverse of this is the melancholy fact.[c]

Griffith Davies.—Griffith Davies was born in Carnarvonshire, in 1788. He was the son of a poor man, and had no training at all in his young days, except that which he obtained from a labouring man in the village Sunday school. Up to the age of seventeen, he had never been to a day school. He had then accumulated money enough to pay for three months' tuition of a very humble description. Here he learned the elements of arithmetic, and afterwards, while working in the slate quarry with his father, used to employ his spare time by figuring upon the pieces of slate with an iron nail. He thus became a very accurate calculator. In process of time he came up to London, opened a school, and had for one of his early pupils John Franklin, the subsequently celebrated Arctic voyager. In 1823 he was appointed actuary to the Guardian Life Office, which situation he maintained with honour and efficiency all his life, and died an humble and devoted Christian.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1. heareth, this word is not in the Heb. The term "instruction" would better be "correction;" then the contrast appears. *Wordsworth* and others suggest that it should read: "A wise son *is* his father's instruction." *i.e.* he is the fruit of it, his wisdom is produced by it.[a] **scorner,** Ps. i. 1; Pr. i. 22.[b] **rebuke,**[c] a much stronger word than correction.

Wisdom and folly (*v.* 1).—I. The wise son hears his father attentively, patiently, obediently, though the words may not always be pleasant or laudatory. II. The foolish son, being scornful, conceited, proud, heareth not rebuke though he most needs it. 1. Compare the course and the end of the two; 2. How is the father affected in either case?[d]

Titus Manlius.—A certain Roman, in the days of paganism, called Titus Manlius, was treated extremely ill by his father, for no other reason than a defect in his speech. A tribune of the people brought an accusation against his father before the people, who hated him for his imperious conduct, and were determined to punish him with severity. The young man hearing this, went one morning very early from his father's country farm, where he was forced to live like a slave, and, finding out the house of the tribune who had impeached his father, entreated that he would immediately drop the prosecution. The tribune declared before the people that he withdrew his charge against old Manlius, because his son Titus had obliged him to promise upon oath that he would carry it no further. The people, charmed with the filial piety of Titus, shown to so unnatural a father,

b Some however prefer to take *no-death* as one word, used here as the equivalent for immortality.

c *C. Rawlings, B.A.*

"Plato had so great and true an idea of perfect righteousness, and was so thoroughly acquainted with the corruption of mankind, that he makes it appear that if a man, perfectly righteous, should come upon earth, he would find so much opposition in the world that he would be imprisoned, reviled, scourged, and in fine crucified by such who, though they were extremely wicked, would yet pass for righteous men."—*Plato.*

a Pr. x. 1, 17.

b "The heedless reviler of religion who has long ago thrown aside all childlike piety and reverence for the holy."—*Zöckler.*

c "How can those mend a fault who will not be told of it, but count those their enemies who do them that kindness?"—*Mat. Henry.*

He. xii. 5.

d *Ilive.*

e *R. T. S.*

"Fortune can, for her pleasure, fools advance, and toss them on the whirling wheels of chance."—*Dryden.*

not only forgave the old man, but the next year advanced his generous son to the supreme honours of the State.[c]

2, 3. (2) eat good, *comp.* ch. xii. 14. fruit of mouth, *i.e.* words. transgressors, here especially those who transgress in speech; by violent speeches trying to injure others, they, in effect, bring violence on themselves.[a] (3) keepeth his life, bec. he does not provoke others to violence towards him; he does not make enemies. openeth . . lips, "loves to bawl, and bluster, and make a noise, and affect such a liberty of speech as bids defiance both to God and man."[b] destruction, of his reputation, his interest, his comfort, and his soul.[c]

Man speaking (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. The self-profiting and self-ruinous in speech. The speech of the good—1. Promotes the development of his own spiritual being; 2. Gratifies his own moral nature; 3. Produces good results in the hearer. II. The self-controlled and the self-reckless in speech. 1. The controlled may be useful; 2. The reckless, dangerous.[d]

A sermon to one hearer.—Dr. Beecher once engaged to preach for a country minister on exchange, and the Sabbath proved to be one excessively stormy, cold, and uncomfortable. It was mid-winter, and the snow was piled all along in the roads, so as to make the passage very difficult. Still the minister urged his horse through the drifts, put the animal into a shed, and went in. As yet there was no person in the house; and after looking about, the old gentleman—then young—took his seat in the pulpit. Soon the door opened, and a single individual walked up the aisle, looked about, and took a seat. The hour came for commencing service, but no more hearers. Whether to preach to such an audience was a question—and it was one that Lyman Beecher was not long deciding. He felt that he had a duty to perform, and he had no right to refuse to do it because only one man could reap the benefit of it; and accordingly he went through all the services, praying, singing, preaching, and the benediction, with only one hearer. And when all was over, he hastened down from the desk to speak to his congregation, but he had departed. A circumstance so rare was referred to occasionally; but, twenty years after, it was brought to the doctor's mind quite strangely. Travelling somewhere in Ohio, the doctor alighted from the stage one day in a pleasant village, when a gentleman stepped up and spoke to him, familiarly calling him by name. "I do not remember you," said the doctor. "I suppose not," said the stranger; "but we once spent two hours together in a house alone in a storm." "I do not recall it, sir," added the old man; "pray when was it?" "Do you remember preaching, twenty years ago, in such a place, to a single person?" "Yes, yes," said the doctor, grasping his hand, "I do, indeed; and if you are the man, I have been wishing to see you ever since." "I am the man, sir; and that sermon saved my soul, made a minister of me, and yonder is my church. The converts of that sermon, sir, are all over Ohio."

4—6. (4) soul, the sluggard only forms vain wishes, he makes no effort to secure their fulfilment. He builds many castles, but they are all castles in the air.[a] made fat, the figure for fully prospered and satisfied. Ch. xii. 14. (5) lying, put generally for all deceitful and injurious speech and action.[b]

[a] "Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue." —*Quarles.*

"Take heed that thy tongue cut not thy throat." —*Arab. Prov.*

Ps. cxli. 3.

b Mat. Henry.

c Ja. iii. 6.

d Dr. Thomas.

"The joy resulting from the diffusion of blessings to all around us is the purest and sublimest that can ever enter the human mind, and can be conceived only by those who have experienced it. Next to the consolations of Divine grace it is the most sovereign balm to the miseries of life, both in him who is the object of it, and in him who exercises it; and it will not only soothe and tranquillise a troubled spirit, but inspire a constant flow of good humour, content, and gaiety of heart."—*Bishop Porteus.*

a 2 Th. iii. 10.

b "A soul that has been made right in relation to the laws of its own spiritual

loathsome, perhaps should be read. acteth basely and shamefully: does shameful deeds. (6) keepeth, protecteth. upright, *etc.*, lit. *innocence of way*, an abstract for the concrete, equivalent to "them that walk uprightly." overthroweth,[c] *lit.* plungeth into sin with all its consequences.

The effects of sin (*vv.* 5, 6).—I. Give the character of the sinner. 1. What is sin?—transgression of law; 2. Hence sin is contempt of God; 3. Rejection of Christ; 4. In the rank of sinners place infidels, etc.; 5. Such are sinners by name, practice, motives, etc. II. Show how sin is the ruin of the sinner. 1. It exhausts his property; 2. Blasts reputation; 3. Destroys health; 4. Hastens approach of death; 5. Effects the damnation of the soul.[d]

The minister of Clermont.—The minister of the seminary at Clermont (France) having been seized at Autun by the populace, the mayor, who wished to save him, advised him not to take the oath, but to allow him to tell the people that he had taken it. "I would myself make known your falsehood to the people," replied the clergyman: "it is not permitted me to ransom my life by a lie. The God who prohibits my taking this oath will not allow me to make it believed that I have taken it." The mayor was silent, and the minister was martyred.

7, hath nothing, of real and lasting worth. "A maxim aimed at foolish pride of birth and empty love of display on the part of men without means, as ch. xii. 9."[a] maketh himself poor, for some purpose simulating poverty to conceal great wealth.[b]

The policy that degrades and ennobles (*v.* 7).—This Proverb may denote—I. A mean social fact. 1. As when one gives out that he is rich and has nothing; 2. Or is rich, but gives out that he is poor. Such conduct is hypocritical, and dishonest, and demoralising: the state of society which submits to such expedients must be corrupt: the man who resorts to them is depraved. II. A grand moral contrast. 1. As when a man sacrifices all that is noble, moral, sacred, in the soul to make himself rich, and has nothing; 2. As when a man sacrifices all that earth can offer to the truth, yet he may be rich.[c]

The three brothers.—A minister soliciting aid towards the erection of a place of worship, waited on an individual distinguished for his wealth and benevolence. Approving the case, he presented to the minister a handsome donation, and, turning to his three sons, who had witnessed the transaction, he advised them to imitate his example. "My dear boys," said he, "you have heard the case; now, what will you give?" One said, "I will give all that my pockets will furnish;" another observed, "I will give half that I have in my purse;" the third sternly remarked, "I will give nothing." Some years after, the minister had occasion to visit the same place, and recollecting the family he had called upon, he inquired into the actual position of the parties. He was informed that the generous father was dead; the youth who had cheerfully given all his store was living in affluence: the son who had divided his pocket-money was in comfortable circumstances; but the third, who had indignantly refused to assist, and haughtily declared "he would give nothing," was so reduced as to be supported by his two brothers.

being, to the universe, and to God, has an instinctive repugnance to falsehood." — *Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Ps. cxix. 29.

c "Maketh to slip." — *Wordsworth.*

d Theta in 400 Sks.

v. 4. *Dr. Watts, Bury St. Sermons*, ii. 289; *W. Richardson*, i. 323.

a Zöckler.

b "The teaching of ch. xi. 24 finds its echo here. There is a seeming wealth behind wh. there lies a deep spiritual poverty and wretchedness. There is a poverty which makes a man rich for the kingdom of God."—*Spk. Com.*

2 Co. vi. 10; Phi. iii. 7, 9.

c W. Wheeler.

"There is no art or science that is too difficult for industry to attain to; it is the gift of tongues, and makes a man understood and valued in all countries, and by all nations. It is the philosopher's stone, that turns all metals, and even stones, into gold, and suffers no want to break into its dwelling. It is the north-west passage,

that brings the merchant's ships to him as soon as he can desire. In a word, it conquers all enemies, and makes fortune itself pay contribution."—*Lord Clarendon.*

"As the sons of the husbandman in the fable, who being told by their father, lying on his death-bed, that he left much gold buried under the ground in his vineyard, fell a-delving and digging all about the vines; and though they found no gold, yet, by stirring the mould about the roots of the trees, gained a great vintage that year; even so it falleth out with the labour of our calling."—*Spencer.*

"The bread earned by the sweat of the brow is thrice blessed, and it is far sweeter than the tasteless loaf of idleness."—*Crowquill.*

"Grete rest stondeth in litel businesse."—*Chaucer.*

"Idleness is a constant sin, and but the devil's home for temptation, and for unprofitable, distracting musings."—*Baxter.*

d Michael Bruce.

Industry.—

Now sober industry, illustrious power!
Hath raised the peaceful cottage, calm abode
Of innocence and joy: now, sweating, guides
The shining ploughshare, tames the stubborn soil,
Leads the long drain along the unfertile marsh,
Bids the bleak hill with vernal verdure bloom,
The haunt of flocks; and clothes the barren heath
With waving harvests and the golden grain.
Fair from his hand behold the village rise,
In rural pride, 'mong intermingled trees!
Above whose aged tops the joyful swains,
At even-tide descending from the hill,
With eye enamour'd, mark the many wreaths
Of pillar'd smoke, high curling to the clouds.
The streets resound with labour's various voice,
Who whistles at his work. Gay on the green,
Young blooming boys, and girls with golden hair,
Trip, nimble-footed, wanton in their play,
The village hope. All in a reverend row,
Their grey-hair'd grandsires, sitting in the sun
Before the gate, and leaning on the staff,
The well-remember'd stories of their youth
Recount, and shake their aged locks with joy.
How fair a prospect rises to the eye,
Where beauty vies in all her vernal forms,
For ever pleasant, and for ever new!
Swells the exulting thought, expands the soul,
Drowning each ruder care: a blooming train
Of bright ideas rushes on the mind,
Imagination rouses at the scene;
And backward, through the gloom of ages past,
Beholds Arcadia, like a rural queen,
Encircled with her swains and rosy nymphs,
The mazy dance conducted on the green.
Nor yield to old Arcadia's blissful vales
Thine, gentle Leven! Green on either hand
Thy meadows spread, unbroken of the plough,
With beauty all their own. The fields rejoice
With all the riches of the golden year.
Fat on the plain, and mountain's sunny side,
Large droves of oxen, and the fleecy flocks,
Feed undisturb'd, and fill the echoing air
With music, grateful to the master's ear.
The traveller stops, and gazes round and round
O'er all the scenes, that animate his heart
With mirth and music. Even the mendicant,
Bowbent with age, that on the old grey stone,
Sole sitting, suns him in the public way,
Feels his heart leap, and to himself he sings.[d]

8, 9. (8) ransom, when taken prisoner, or fined in the courts, a man's money is taken from him: but they who have no money are free from the risks of the threats and litigations that beset the rich.[a] The import of the verse has been given thus: "A rich man, when he fears any evil from his enemies, can divert it by a sum of money; but the poor man, when he is

[a] "Who ever thinks of robbing or murdering a beggar? He is everywhere safe and free from molestation fr. whom there is

threatened, dares not stay, but runs away." (9) **light,**[b] a fig. for the prosperity and blessing of the righteous. The Lord Himself is their light. **rejoiceth,**[c] increaseth, groweth in brightness, so giving ever more joy. **lamp**, or *candle*. A word signifying both a temporary and a man-lighted thing is chosen in order to point the contrast.[d] The light of the wicked is a lamp of their own kindling.

The lights of the soul (*v.* 9).—The text leads us to consider two things. I. The joyous light of the soul—the light of the righteous. II. The transient light of the soul—the lamp of the wicked.[e]

The liberal soul made rich.—Much had been said one evening, at the meeting of a missionary society, on the blessing which always seemed to rest on those who gave largely towards the support of Christian missions. The next morning, at breakfast, a lady gave the following account to one of the party who were her visitors on that occasion :—"I had three brothers," she said, "who had been brought up with much care by my excellent father and mother. They had endeavoured to impress upon all their children the duty and the high privilege of laying by and giving even of their little store to the spreading of the kingdom of our blessed Redeemer. It happened that each of these brothers possessed a box, in which he was accustomed to drop any small sum of money that might be given to him. In the confusion of moving from our residence at ——— to another house, these boxes were for a time mislaid, and were long looked for in vain. Some time afterwards, the three boxes were unexpectedly found : the boys were delighted at the discovery of their lost treasures, and determined at once to open their boxes. It was rather a curious circumstance that the three boxes contained almost the same sum of money—about ten pounds. My eldest brother had long wished to possess a watch ; and without hesitation he instantly appropriated the whole of the contents of his box to the purchase of one. My second brother was of a divided mind : he accordingly separated his money into two portions : one he spent for his own gratification, the other portion he gave to some religious society. My youngest brother gave up all ; he reserved no portion for his own self-indulgence, but freely and joyfully gave the whole to the Lord. And now," added the lady, "I must tell you something of the after life of each of my brothers. The dispositions which were then shown in so marked a way proved indicative of the future course of each of these young men. The eldest has been engaged in many undertakings which seemed to promise wealth, and he has expended large sums of money ; but he has failed in everything ; and at the close of a long life he is a poor man, and has been for some considerable time dependent on the bounty of his youngest brother. My second brother is not poor ; but he has never been rich, nor satisfied with his very moderate circumstances. I am now in mourning for my youngest brother. He died lately, leaving £100,000, after having freely given away at least as much to missions among the heathen, and to other works of love. God prospered him in everything that he undertook ; and he ceased not, throughout the whole course of his life, to give freely of all that God gave to his hand. Freely he had received, and freely and cheerfully did he give."[f]

nothing to be had. Poverty then is not without its advantages."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Matt. v. 14, 16.

c "The same root, in Arabic, means to laugh, or to sport."—*Hitzig.*

d "The righteous have the true light in them. That wh. belongs to the wicked is but derived and temporary, and shall be extinguished before long."—*Spk. Com.*

"The light of the righteous is an inextinguishable sun—that of the wicked a mere flickering 'lamp,' the breath of destiny will put it out." — *Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Job xxi. 17; Ps. xlix. 17—19.

e Dr. Thomas.

v. 9. *R. Warner*, iii. 227.

There are those who paint the face of infinite benevolence with an eternal frown.

Christian benevolence is a compound of active effort and tender compassion, flowing from a supreme love to Jesus Christ.

There is enough in every man to keep him from idleness—if, indeed, he do not prefer an unjust peace to a just war.

f The Kingdom and the People.

10. only, better, *surely.*[a] pride, or self-conceit, wh. is an unfailing source of quarrelling. well advised, those showing a modest inclination to consult and consider others.[b]

Pride (*v.* 10).—We learn—I. That pride generates contention: for in society pride is essentially exacting, insolent, heartless, detracting; hence is ever generating contention. II. That pride rejects counsels.[c]

Folly of pride.—A proud man is a fool in fermentation, that swells and boils over like a porridge-pot. He sets out his feathers like an owl, to swell and seem bigger than he is. He is troubled with a tumour and inflammation of self-conceit, that renders every part of him stiff and uneasy. He has given himself sympathetic love-powder, that works upon him to dotage, and has transformed him into his own mistress. He is his own gallant, and makes most passionate addresses to his own dear perfections. He commits idolatry to himself, and worships his own image; though there is no soul living of his church but himself, yet he believes as the church believes, and maintains his faith with the obstinacy of a fanatic. He is his own favourite, and advances himself not only above his merit, but all mankind; is both Damon and Pythias to his own dear self, and values his crony above his soul. He gives place to no man but himself, and that with very great distance to all others, whom he esteems not worthy to approach him. He believes whatever he has receives a value in being his, as a horse in a nobleman's stable will bear a greater price than in a common market. He is so proud, that he is as hard to be acquainted with himself as with others; for he is very apt to forget who he is, and knows himself only superficially; therefore he treats himself civilly as a stranger, with ceremony and compliment, but admits of no privacy. He strives to look bigger than himself as well as others; and is no better than his own parasite and flatterer. A little flood will make a shallow torrent swell above its banks, and rage and foam and yield a roaring noise, while a deep, silent stream glides quietly on; so a vainglorious, insolent, proud man swells with a little frail prosperity, grows big and loud, and overflows his bounds, and when he sinks leaves mud and dirt behind him. His carriage is as glorious and as haughty as if he were advanced upon men's shoulders, or tumbled over their heads like Knipperdolling. He fancies himself a Colosse: and so he is, for his head holds no proportion to his body, and his foundation is lesser than his upper stories. We can naturally take no view of ourselves, unless we look downwards, to teach us what humble admirers we ought to be of our own value. The slighter and less solid his materials are the more room they take up, and make him swell the bigger, as feathers and cotton will stuff cushions better than things of more close and solid parts.[d]

11, 12. (11) by vanity,[a] by some means distinct fr. honest and earnest labour. By chance, or good luck, by inheritance. be diminished, we have a similar proverb, "Light come, light go." by labour, Heb. *with the hand:* "handful by handful," or "according to his ability."[b] (12) hope, a complex state of mind: an expectant desire. deferred, *i.e.* the attainment of the desire is sometimes long deferred. heart sick, peevish, fretful. desire cometh, or when the object of desire is attained. "Desire that hath come is desire accomplished."

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a "The meaning is this—'The obstinacy wh. attends self-conceit produces contention, wh. the well-advised thus evincing modesty avoid.'" —*Fausset.*

b "Meekly ask counsel of God, consult His Word, His ministers, your pious friends, and your own conscience; ponder your path and you will be enabled to act prudently and live in peace."—*Nicholls.*

Mat. v. 5; Phi. ii. 3; Ja. iii. 17.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 10. *Dr. A. Innes*, 153.

"He whose pride oppresses the humble may, perhaps, be humbled, but will never be humble."—*Lavater.*

"Self-pride is the common friend of our humanity, and, like the bell of our church, is resorted to on all occasions: it ministers alike to our festivals or our fasts, our merriment or our mourning, our weal or our woe." —*Colton.*

d *Butler.*

a Some trans. "Wealth dwindles faster than the breath."—*Miller.* "Secured in an unsubstantial, inconsiderate, fraudulent way." —*Ewald.*

b "It describes the gradual and

tree of life, fig. for a thing that continually bears fruitage of blessing.[c]

Buffon.—This great naturalist gives us the history of his writings in a few words. "In my youth I was very fond of sleep: it robbed me of a great deal of my time, but my poor Joseph (his servant) was of great service in enabling me to overcome it. I promised to give Joseph a crown every time that he would make me get up at six. Next morning he did not fail to wake me and to torment me; but he only received abuse. The next day he did the same, with no better success; and I was obliged to confess at noon that I had lost my time. I told him that he did not know how to manage his business; he ought to think of my promise, and not mind my threats. The day following he employed force: I begged for indulgence, I bid him begone, I stormed, but Joseph persisted. I was therefore obliged to comply; and he was rewarded every day for the abuse which he suffered at the moment when I awoke, with thanks, accompanied with a crown, which he received about an hour after. Yes, I am indebted to poor Joseph for ten or a dozen of the volumes of my works."

progressive accumulation of wealth, resulting from diligence and exertion and so is in significant contrast with the impatient dishonesty of the preceding clause."—*Zöckler.*

c "Our wisdom is not to promise ourselves too much from the creature; but in reference to what God has promised we should never despair, however long we may wait."—*Nicholls.*

13, 14. (13) **the word,**[a] first and chiefly the Word of God; then all words of truth and duty. **be destroyed,** lit. *is in bonds to it.* **feareth,** so as to concern himself about obedience. **shall be rewarded,** or to him is requital. (14) **fountain,** or ever fresh source. **snares of death,** Ps. xviii. 5; an established formula for the description of mortal perils.

The Word (*v.* 13).—I. The Word despised is ruin. 1. Because he who despises rejects the only instrument of soul-salvation: 2. Brings on his nature the condemnation of heaven. II. The Word reverenced is blessedness. 1. Such a man is rewarded in its blessed influences on his own soul; 2. With the approbation of heaven.[b]

A good reason.—Two persons who professed religion were standing at the door of a theatre in the city of New York, when one of them proposed to go in and see the play, and desired his friend to accompany him. The other declined the invitation: and after being repeatedly solicited to enter, gave this excellent reason for his refusal: "If I should go in, and while there be called into eternity, and should be asked at the door of heaven where I had come from, I should be ashamed to answer."[c]

a "Those that prefer the rules of carnal policy before Divine precepts, and the allurements of the world and the flesh before God's promises and comforts, despise His Word, giving the preference to those things wh. stand in competition with it."—*Matt Henry.*

Heb. ii. 2, 3, xii. 25.

b *Dr. Thomas.*

c *Whitecross.*

15, 16. (15) **good understanding,** right perception and action. "Kindly wisdom."[a] **hard,** hardened, so as to be desolate and unfruitful. "Rough to the feet, and like a craggy precipice."[b] "The idea is that of a barren, dry soil, or the impassable marsh, in contrast with the fountain of life, carrying joy and refreshment with it."[c] (16) **prudent,** *etc.*, Pr. xii. 23, xv. 2. **layeth open,** spreadeth. This Proverb rebukes the rash and inconsiderate. Some are forward to talk of that they do not understand, and to undertake that for wh. they are unfit; and such persons speedily expose their ignorance and inability, and make themselves ridiculous.

Downward, yet difficult (*v.* 15).—I. This fact is opposed to received notions. II. This fact is in accordance with experience. The transgressor finds—1. Difficulties innumerable; 2. Dangers on every side; 3. Disappointments without number; 4.

a *Zöckler.*

"A good understanding must include four things—enlightenment, impartiality, religiousness, and practicalness. So a good understanding is tantamount to practical godliness."—*Dan. Thomas, D.D.*

b *Wordsworth.*

c *Spk. Com.*

Voltaire said, "I

begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition, environed by deepest darkness on every side. I wish I had never been born."

"How hard a master he serves where the devil gives the employment, and shame is his entertainment, and sin is his work, and hell is his wages."—*Bp. J. Taylor.*

d Stems and Twigs.

e Iota in 400 Sks.

"Indolence is, methinks, an intermediate state between pleasure and pain, and very much unbecoming any part of our life after we are out of the nurse's arms."—*Steele.*

f R T. S.

Penalties most dreadful afterwards.[d]—*The hardship of sin.*—I. State what is to be understood by the way of transgressors. II. Consider the doctrine of the text respecting this way. 1. Through the kindness of God it is hard to shun or resist the light; 2. It sometimes becomes needful for God to deal severely with obdurate sinners, as a warning to others; 3. The punishment of such in the end must be very dreadful. Apply:—(1) How sinners are deceived in this way; (2) Madness to continue in it; (3) To be saved it must be left; (4) A mercy that we may leave it.[e]

An old apologue.—A man going out of his beaten and directed way to gather unlawful fruits, fell into a deep pit. In his fall he caught hold on the arm of a tree growing in it. Thus he hung in the midway, betwixt the upper light from which he fell and the lower darkness to which he was falling. He looks downward, and sees two worms gnawing at the root of this tree. He looks upward, and spies on a branch a hive of honey. He climbs up to it and feedeth on it. But in the meantime the worms did bite in sunder the root, and down falls man, and tree, and all, into the bottom of the dark pit. Man himself is this wretch, who, straying from the way of God's commandments, fell to eat of the forbidden fruit;—instantly he fell. The pit over which he hangeth is the grave; the tree whereby he holdeth is this mortal life; the two worms are day and night; the hive of honey is the pleasures and lusts of this world. Thereupon he greedily feeds, until the two consumers, day and night, in their vicissitudes, have eaten asunder the root of life. Then down drops earth to earth; there it must lodge in the silent grave, neither seeing nor seen, blended in the forgotten dust and undistinguished mould, till it be awakened by the archangels' trump in the great day of Christ.[f]

17—19. (17) **wicked**, in the sense of unfaithful to his trust, or wanting diligence in the execution of it. **into mischief**, as a punishment for his faithlessness.[a] **ambassador**, only another word for messenger, not strictly a king's representative. **health**, to all concerned; to himself, to those who send him, and to those to whom he is sent.[b] (18) **poverty**, *etc.*, a sentiment previously expressed, ch. x. 17, xii. 1. (19) **desire accomplished**, better, *quickened desire.*[c]

The incorrigible and the docile (*v.* 18).—I. The doom of the incorrigible—1. In secular matters; 2. In intellectual matters; 3. In moral matters. II. The destiny of the teachable. 1. His own soul will honour him; 2. Society will honour him; 3. God will honour him.[d]

A faithful ambassador.—Count Bismarck left to consult his Majesty, and returned in a quarter of an hour. It then appeared that the King accepted the proposal as to Tours, but insisted that the garrison of Strasburg should constitute themselves prisoners. It would seem that M. Favre was out of health at the time, for he describes himself as being "perfectly exhausted" on the return of Prince Bismarck. For a moment he thought he should faint, and turned away to hide the tears which suffocated him. Asking to be excused for his involuntary weakness, he took his leave in these words:—"I made a mistake, M. le Comte, in coming here; but I do not regret it. I have suffered sufficiently to excuse myself in my own eyes; but in any case I only yielded to

a 2 Ki. v. 26, 27.

b Ge. xxiv. 34, 37, 38, 51—56.

c Spk. Com. gives two poss. trans. of this obscure verse. "Satisfied desire is pleasant, therefore it is an abomination to fools to depart fr. the evil on wh. their minds are set."

"Sweet is the satisfaction of desire, yet the wicked will not depart fr. the evil wh. makes that satisfaction impossible."

d Dr. Thomas.

e v. 18. *Canon Wordsworth, Pub. Education*, 229.

a feeling of duty. I will report to my Government all that you have said, and, should they consider it fit again to send me to you, however cruel the task for me, I shall have the honour of returning. I am grateful for the kindness you have shown me, but I fear that all that can be done is to let events take their course. The inhabitants of Paris are courageous, and resolved to make every sacrifice; and their heroism may change the course of events. If you have the honour of conquering them, you will never subjugate them. The whole nation is possessed with the same sentiments. As long as there can be found one element of resistance amongst us, we shall fight you. This becomes an interminable struggle between two nations who should extend their hands to each other. I had hoped for a different solution. I leave most unhappy, but nevertheless full of hope."[e]

e Cassel's Hist. of Franco - German War.

20. **walketh**, as his friends and chosen companions.[a] **companion**, *etc.*, the play upon words in the Heb. of this clause may be thus imitated, "He who attendeth fools tendeth to folly."[b] **be destroyed**, better, "shall smart for it."

The best company (*v.* 20).—I. Who are the wise? 1. Those who seek the favour and friendship of God, the best of all ends; 2. Those who seek them through the acceptance of the Gospel, the best of all means. II. How may we walk with the wise? 1. By cherishing their principles; 2. By cultivating their society; 3. By perusing their publications. III. Why will walking with the wise make us wise? 1. There is the force of example; 2. There is the power of sympathy; 3. There is the influence of conversation; 4. There is the promise of God.[c]—*The fate of the fool's friend.*—I. Who are fools? 1. Those who occupy their time and thoughts with trifles; 2. Who neglect important truths and realities; 3. Who do not prepare for great and unavoidable realities. II. How may we walk with fools? 1. By following their example; 2. Frequenting their company; 3. Reading their books. III. What are the consequences? 1. We shall be tainted with their vices; 2. Share in their present sufferings; 3. Involved in their everlasting doom.[d]

The scented clay.—"One day, as I was in the bath, a friend of mine put in my hand a piece of scented clay. I took it, and said to it, 'Art thou musk or ambergris? for I am charmed with thy perfume.' It answered, 'I was a despicable piece of clay, but I was some time in the company of the rose; the sweet quality of my companion was communicated to me, otherwise I should only be a bit of clay as I appear to be.'"[e]—*Lord Peterborough and Fénélon.*—When Lord Peterborough lodged for a season with Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambray, he was so delighted with his piety and virtue, that he exclaimed at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

a "A good man is the best friend, and therefore soonest to be chosen, longer to be retained, and indeed never to be parted with, unless he cease to be that for which he was chosen."—*J. Taylor.*

b "He that would be safe fr. the acts of evil must wisely avoid the occasions."—*Bp. Hall.*

1 Cor. xv. 33; Eph. v. 11.

c G. Brooks.

d Ibid.

"People have no right to make fools of themselves, unless they have no relations to blush for them."—*Haliburton.*

e Persian Fable.

21, 22. (21) **pursueth**, and is sure to catch them one day. **good shall be**, or He, God, shall repay good. "Destiny follows character. Misery grows out of sin, and happiness out of goodness."[a] "The avenging deities are shod with wool," but they never pause or tire. (22) **leaveth**, *etc.*, transmitteth his estate. **children's children**, goodness secures stability through generations. **wealth . . just**, an intimation that, in the long run, "the heaped up treasures of the wicked find their way into the hands of better men."[b]

a "Character draws destiny after it by an almighty magnetism. It is a fruitful tree; it never ceases bearing; every branch is clustered; but the fruit is either misery or happiness, ac-

cording to its own vital sap."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*
Ge. v. 10; Nu. xxxv. 19; Ro. ii. 6—10.
b Job xxvii. 17; Ec. ii. 26.
Goodness is the safest law of entail.
v. 21. *T. Dorrington*, 169; *Dr. S. Clarke*, vi. 319; *J. W. Wickes*, 23.
v. 22. *Sir H. W. Moncrieff*, 205; *W. Jay*, iii. 93.
c Whitecross.

a Pr. xii. 11.
b He. xii. 6, 7.
Pr. iii. 12, xxiii. 13, 14, xxix. 15.
c "Acts as if he hated him."—*Fausset.*
"It is *his* rod that must be used, the rod of a parent, directed by wisdom and love, and designed for good, not the rod of a servant."—*Mat. Henry.*
"Children have been called rough diamonds. Parents are to polish them, and they must neither be struck unskilfully nor left uncut."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*
d Dr. R. Wardlaw.
v. 24. *Bp. Fleetwood*, 79.
e Whitecross.

a Ps. xxxvii. 3.
b Is. lxv. 13, 14; Mi. vi. 14.
"Indolence is, methinks, an intermediate state between pleasure and pain, and very much unbecoming any part of our life after we are out of the nurse's arms."—*Steele.*

The lost and unfound.—"Walking along Bishopsgate Street," says one, "I observed a group of women, one of whom was holding by the hand a little child of two years and a half of age, to which they now and then cast an eye. As I was passing them, a girl asked her who held the child—'Is that a lost child?' who answered it was. I looked to the poor child, which seemed perfectly at ease, without any expression of concern. The girl's question strongly recurred to my mind, 'Is that a lost child?' I immediately looked round upon the multitude, who were passing along on both sides of the street, asking myself—How many of these are lost and unfound children of men, still going astray, still wandering from God and the way of peace, yet as insensible to their situation as the little lost child, and have as little concern about returning to their Father's house as it had." How encouraging the truth, that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost.[e]

23, 24. (23) **much . . poor**, every acre of land is full of possible wealth, which may be won from it by industry and skill. The reference is to newly-cleared land, which has cost much labour. **want of judgment**, or disregard of right, comp. ch. xvi. 8.[a] A great estate may be ruined by indiscretion. (24) **spareth his rod**, the instrument of wise and loving correction.[b] **hateth**,[c] in the Bible sense of *loving less;* loving unworthily, injudiciously. **betimes**, or early in the morning; the sign of anxiety and earnestness.

Parental corrections (*v.* 24).—I. The rod, however used, should be a last resort. II. We should be sure that a fault has been committed. III. Let there be always a due proportion between the fault and the correction. IV. Never chastise in a passion.[d]

Parental corrections.—A little boy of about five years of age, having offended his father, was called to account by him. After conversing with his son, and telling him the guilt and consequences of disobedience, the father knelt down and prayed for him. He then repeated to him a few texts of Scripture, such as, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." After briefly explaining these passages, the father continued, "You see, my son, what God says; now what is my duty?" "Why, pa," said the little boy, "it is your duty to punish me; I have done wrong and deserve it." After receiving the chastisement, he embraced and kissed his father; and promised never again to disobey him.[e]

25. **eateth**, the good fruitage of his righteous ways and works. God's promise to the righteous is, "Verily thou shalt be fed."[a] "Those that feast on the bread of life, that feast on the promises, meet with abundant satisfaction of soul there, eat, and are filled." **belly**, representing his carnal desires. Even in this life the wicked has not the best of it.[b]

A great change.—An old medical gentleman, nine years ago, Dr. ——, had a respectable practice, and kept his carriage. He soon commenced, however, to partake too freely of intoxicating liquors. In a short time he neglected his patients, his character also became injured, and for some time he and his once respect-

able family have been actually reduced to such a state of destitution by intemperance, that they have even been deprived of lodgings, and had nothing to allay the cravings of nature but a few cold potatoes, received from their neighbours. A few weeks ago they were admitted into the workhouse: their passage has since been paid to America, and they are about to leave the land of their fathers. What a change in nine years![c]

c *Whitecross.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—3. (1) every wise woman, lit. *the wisdoms of women.*[a] buildeth, or establisheth, confirmeth, increaseth the wealth and stability of it.[b] foolish, add *woman*, incapable, with the further idea of wicked. The woman of miserable temper, or degrading habit, such as drunkenness, soon ruins a home. plucketh, *etc.*, *i.e.* she as certainly destroys the family and the home as she would if she actually plucked down the house. (2) he . . uprightness, wh. is the sure sign of the true fear of God.[c] "In his uprightness" may be trans. "in a level track." perverse, wayward, preferring the uneven and crooked ways of wilfulness. despiseth, Jehovah; disregarding His laws and His judgments. (3) rod, or branch. "wh. he brandishes at random, and wh. often recoils on himself."[d] The foolish here is the boastful and overbearing braggart. preserve them, or procure good to them.

Housewifery (*v.* 1).—I. Its great power. 1. It can build up materially, spiritually: 2. It can pull down. II. Its necessary qualification—wisdom. 1. Using the right means; 2. Using the right means for the right end.[e]

A literary wife.—Reiske affixed his wife's portrait to his learned and excellent edition of the Greek orators. In the preface to his first volume, he speaks with much gratitude and affection of the assistance she rendered him in comparing the numerous editions and manuscripts, while he used to correct the text. "She is," says he, "a modest and frugal woman: she loves me and my literary employments, and is an industrious and skilful assistant. Induced by affection for me, she applied herself to the study of Greek and Latin under my tuition. She knew neither of these languages when we were married; but she was soon able to lighten the multifarious and very severe labours to be performed in this undertaking. The Aldine and Pauline editions she alone compared: also the fourth Augustine edition. As I had taught her the Erasmian pronunciation, she read first to me the Morellian copy, while I read those in manuscript. She laboured unweariedly in arranging, correcting, and preparing my confused copy for the press. As I deeply feel, and publicly express, my gratitude for her aid, so I trust that present and future generations may hold her name in honoured remembrance."[f]—*Heroic women.*—Society is full of heroes of love and domestic fidelity. Thousands of them are unknown on earth. They march in ranks and battalions, so that we speak of them in nouns of multitude, as drunkards' wives. All those that under such circumstances lift themselves up above the ordinary line of human conduct, are heroic. And God waits for them, and heaven is home-sick for them. Oh, how they will shine there! Perchance, as you see them going through the street, meek and patient, their dress

a Pr. i. 20, ix. 1.
b "The fullest recognition that has as yet met us of the importance of woman, for good or evil, in all human society."—*Spk. Com.*
"By a prudent wife, one that is pious, industrious, and considerate, the affairs of the family are made to prosper, debts are paid, portions raised, provision made, the children well educated and maintained, and the family has comfort within doors and credit without. Thus is the house built."—*Mat. Henry.*
c "The generating in human hearts supreme love to God, is the only effective way to promote true morality in men — morality in the family, in the market, in the nation, in the world. There is no true morality without religion. Piety is the first principle of all rectitude."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*
d *Wordsworth.*
e *Dr. Thomas.*
f *Mrs. Child.*
"The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath, feels in its barrenness some touch of spring, and in the April dew, or beam of

May, its moss and lichens freshen and revive—and thus the heart most sear'd to human pleasure, melts at the tear, joys at the smile of woman."—*Sir Joseph Beaumont.* "Burns says with gloomy grandeur, 'There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care which makes the dreary objects seem larger than life.' He who suffers thus cannot be relieved by any appliances save those that touch the heart—the homelier, the more sanative—and none so sure as a wife's affectionate ways, quietly moving about the house affairs, which, insignificant as they are in themselves, are felt to be little troubled realities that banish those monstrous phantoms, showing them to be but glooms and shadows."—*Professor Wilson.*
g H. W. Beecher.
h Bulwer Lytton.

growing more and more rusty, you smile pityingly, and say, "They are poor drunkards' wives; they were promising once, but they have gone down, down, down, and now they are nowhere." I beg your pardon, they have not gone down. They have been going up. And when you rise, with all your wealth, and learning, and genius, and stand in heaven, having escaped damnation so as by fire, you may stand lowest, and see them as far above you as the stars to-night are above your heads. For the last shall be first, and the lowest shall be highest.[g]—*The temper of women.*—Happy the man on whose marriage hearth temper smiles kind from the eyes of woman! "No deity present," saith the heathen proverb, "where absent—prudence"—no joy long a guest where peace is not a dweller. Peace, so like faith, that they may be taken for each other, and poets have clad them with the same veil. But in childhood, in early youth, expect not the changeless green of the cedar. Wouldst thou distinguish fine temper from spiritless dulness, from cold simulation—ask less what the temper, than what the disposition. Is the nature sweet and trustful, is it free from the morbid self-love which calls itself "sensitive feeling," and frets at imaginary offences—is the tendency to be grateful for kindness, yet take kindness meekly, and accept as a benefit what the vain call a due? From dispositions thus blessed, sweet temper will come forth to gladden thee, spontaneous and free. Quick with some, with some slow, word and look emerge out of the heart. Be thy first question, "Is the heart itself generous and tender?" If it be so self-control comes with deepening affection. Call not that a good heart which, hastening to sting if a fibre be ruffled, cries, "I am no hypocrite." Accept that excuse, and revenge becomes virtue. But where the heart, if it give the offence, pines till it win back the pardon; if offended itself, bounds forth to forgive, ever longing to soothe, ever grieved if it wound; then be sure that its nobleness will need but few trials of pain in each outbreak, to refine and chasten its expression. Fear not then; be but noble thyself, thou art safe.[h]

4. **crib is clean,** needs therefore no labour, but as certainly yields no increase or profit.[a] The meaning is, "He who will develop his wealth to a gratifying abundance must employ the appropriate means."[b] The ox is the animal used in farming work. **strength,** wh. is used in ploughing, etc., but calls for labour in tending and feeding, etc.[c]

The clean crib (*v.* 4).—I. The negative gain of indolence: saves labour. 1. Trust in secular matters; 2. In intellectual matters; 3. In spiritual matters. II. The positive loss of indolence. 1. In secular matters, the pleasure of gaining and rightly using wealth; 2. In intellectual matters: 3. In spiritual matters.[d]

Frederick II. of Prussia, even after age and infirmities had increased upon him, gave strict orders never to be allowed to sleep later than four in the morning. Peter the Great, whether at work in the docks at London as a ship-carpenter, or at the anvil as a blacksmith, or on the throne of Russia, always rose before daylight. "I am," says he, "for making my life as long as I can, and therefore sleep as little as possible."

5, 6. (5) **lies,** or false injurious things concerning his neighbour.[a] **utter lies,** or the very breath of him is lies. (6)

a Comp. prov. "Nothing costs nothing, but brings nothing in."
b Hitzig.
c "Labour has its rough unpleasant side, yet it ends in profit."—*Spk. Com.*
d Dr. Thomas.
v. 4. R. Montgomery, iii.

a Ex. xx. 16, xxiii. 1; Pr. vi. 19, xii. 17.

scorner . . not, bec. his spirit prevents him from either seeing or valuing truth. Only the humble and teachable spirit succeeds in seeking. understandeth, *i.e.* "considers God's majesty and power, and his own weakness, and therefore humbly seeks for His grace by prayer."[b]

Deceit discovered.—The writer of an article on the "Madras Washerman," in the *Leisure Hour* for 1854, says: "It is a common excuse (among a certain class of the Madras gentry) with regard to linen, personal or for the table, to say that the washerman has not brought them home yet, the said washerman being perfectly innocent of having even so much as a rag in his possession. Once, however, a gentleman, who indulged in such falsehoods, was properly caught in his own net. Having a few friends to dinner, when all the guests were assembled there existed a deficit in the article of napkins. 'Where are all the napkins?' asked the host, austerely, of his black servant. 'Master got no more,' bluntly responded that individual. A look black as a thundercloud was the poor servant's reward, whilst the abashed entertainer endeavoured to explain away the matter as best he could. No sooner, however, had the guests retired than the poor trembling chokera was summoned and severely reprimanded. 'And mind,' concluded the master, 'if ever anything of that kind is wanting again, you always say that they are gone to the wash.' The servant promised obedience, and to the utter confusion of his master followed his instructions to the letter; for it happened, not long afterwards, when more guests were assembled, that this time the host was short of silver spoons. 'Where are all the spoons?' demanded he, recklessly, of blacky. 'Oh, if you please, sir,' said the boy, 'them all gone to the wash.'" So the Madras washerman might have whispered a startling fact into this gentleman's ears, which he ought to have known well himself, namely, that however trifling a sin may appear, it will, if you do not learn to forsake it, find you out and shame you, and that too when least expected.

7—9. (7) when thou, *etc.*, better, *and thou*, etc.; however long you may be with the foolish man you will get nothing but folly from him. (8) understand his way, carefully studying it, and considering what may be for the best. deceit, prob. self-deceit. Or, "the folly, not the wisdom, of fools is shown in their ceaseless effort to deceive."[a] (9) fools . . sin, some trans. "The sacrifice maketh sport of fools." The expiatory sacrifice wh. ungodly fools offer to God is utterly useless, as it does not gain the favour of God.[b]

Beware of the foolish (*v.* 7).—I. Or you may be classed with him. II. When you find him incorrigible. III. For you may excite him to greater folly. IV. Because folly is contagious. V. He may harm you. VI. You do him too much honour.[c]—*True wisdom* (*v.* 8).—I. The wisdom of some is to understand things which cannot be understood. II. The wisdom of others is to pry into things which, if understood, are of little or no use. III. Of others to understand the way of other men. IV. Our highest wisdom is to understand our own way through life to the heavenly home.[d]

Mr. Wilmer.—Dr. Doddridge mentions in one of his letters that Mr. Wilmer, the eldest son of the then (1743) Member of Parliament for Northampton, died a few days before of a fright.

Unfaithfulness in witnesses is one of the most serious difficulties felt in Eastern law courts.

b Wordsworth. "The bearing of this Prov. is plainly directed against that superficial, trivial, seeming culture of the scoffers at religion (who, in the perverted sense of the word, are the enlightened), wh. lacks all genuine earnestness, and for that very reason all really deep knowledge and discernment."—*Zöckler.*

Pr. viii. 9; Jno. vii. 17; Ja. i. 5, 6. *vv.* 5—8. *R. Greenham*, 612.

"He that comes to seek after knowledge with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find enough for his humour, but none for his instruction."—*Lord Bacon.*

a Spk. Com.

b Zöckler.

"With regard to evil companions it has been said, 'One rotten apple will infect the store; the putrid grape corrupts the whole sound cluster. If I have found any good companions, I will cherish them as the choicest of men, or as angels wh. are sent as guardians to me. If I have any bad ones I will study to lose them, lest by keeping them I lose myself in the end.'"—*Feltham.*

c Stems and Twigs.

d A. Fuller.

He had been drinking the devil's health, with a profane debauchee, the son of a baronet, who was his intimate companion, and who, to try the young hero's courage, placed a servant under the bed, who first lifted it up, and then came out in some disguise with a noise, which shocked the wretched youth to such a degree that he never recovered from it. "Fools make a mock of sin;" but they find, after all, that its "wages" is "death."[e]

10, 11. (10) own bitterness, Heb. *bitterness of his soul*, wh. is the seat of the passions and perturbations of man's nature.[a] (11) house, *etc.*, comp. ch. xii. 15, xvi. 25. house, wh. seems firmly established is contrasted with the tabernacle, or tent, wh. seems so slight and unstable.

Man's experience known to himself alone (*v.* 10).—This is true—I. In reference to the concerns of this world. Many have troubles, comforts, joys, of which others must be ignorant. II. In reference to the concerns of the soul. Learn hence—1. Contentment; 2. Charity; 3. Earnestness in the ways of God.[b]—*The solitude of the soul.*—I. We should feel a kind of awe in the presence of the humblest, the poorest, the most commonplace of mankind. II. How uncertain our judgments are concerning the moral character of men. III. Our ignorance of each other's life should teach us the right value of the good opinion of men. IV. We should care supremely for God's judgment of our character, and rely upon His support, etc. V. God's perfect knowledge makes His sympathy with us perfect.[c]

Desaugiers.—Few authors could be mentioned who had the reputation of being such entertaining companions as Desaugiers; no one could enliven a company of friends, or set the table in a roar like him. There is not one of his songs which does not breathe the most lively and most unfettered gaiety: and as to the figure of Desaugiers, it seemed the most complete type of the happiest man upon the face of the earth. Always singing, always laughing, the countenance of Desaugiers seemed to defy the attacks of sorrow; his whole life appeared to be spent in the midst of a continual feast. And yet Desaugiers was sad; melancholy overwhelmed his heart in his most joyous festivals, and amidst his most mirthful songs; if he celebrated so much the pleasures of wine, it was because he sought in it the forgetfulness of that gnawing grief which he concealed from every eye, and would have wished to conceal even from himself.[d]

12—14. (12) a way, plainly the way of wilfulness and self-indulgence.[a] seemeth right, according to the man's ideas, not *is right* according to the law of God. ways of death, surely lead down to moral ruin. (13) in laughter, *i.e.* often in circumstances producing a superficial joyousness, there is often an underlying profounder sorrow. But the reference here is better confined to the mirth of the foolish and self-willed. (14) backslider, one who falls away from God and God-fearing. in heart, this may come to pass before there are wrong-doings in the life.[b] But God knoweth the heart, and will be sure to bring on the man the bitter fruitage of his sin. good . . self, *lit.* "a good man is away from such;" he will not associate with the backslider.

The backslider (*v.* 14).—I. Backsliding has its seat and source in the heart. II. It may be ascribed to various causes. III. It

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e R. T. S.

"Of all thieves fools are the worst; they rob you of time and temper."—*Goethe.*

a "Each mind possesses in its interior mansions a solemn retired apartment, peculiarly its own, into wh. none but himself and the Deity can enter."—*Foster.*

"Within the range of human experience there is perhaps no expression of the ultimate solitude of each man's soul at all times, so striking in its truth and depth as this. Something there is in every sorrow, and in every joy, wh. no one else can share."—*Spk. Com.*

1 Cor. ii. 11.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c R. W. Dale, M.A.

d Whitecross.

a Pr. xvi. 2.

b "Backsliding begins in the heart; it is the evil heart of unbelief that departs fr. God; and of all sinners backsliders will have most terror when they reflect on their own ways."—*Mat. Henry.*

Pr. i. 31, xii. 14.

c G. Brooks.

v. 12. *R. Warnford*, i. 105; *J. I.*

may be checked by a remembrance of former attainments, by a sense of present unhappiness, by an anticipation of future judgments.[c]

A hearer of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge.—Dr. Doddridge was once preaching on the calling and the glorious hopes of the Christian. One of his hearers, after the sermon, addressed him in the following terms: "You have made an excellent and encouraging discourse; but these privileges do not belong to me, nor shall I ever have the least interest in them." "What reason have you for so saying?" asked the doctor; "Jesus is able to save to the uttermost." "I will tell you my circumstances," the man replied, "and then you will not be surprised. I once made a profession of religion, which I supported with great regularity and decorum for several years. I was very strict in the performance of the duties required by the Christian system. None could charge me with immorality of conduct, or the neglect of positive commands: but in course of time my zeal departed from me, and I became careless and remiss in my walk and conversation. I felt no satisfaction arising from the performance of spiritual duties, and gradually declined my customary observance of them. Instead of praying twice or thrice a day, I only prayed once; the same with respect to family religion; and at last these sacred engagements were entirely omitted, which soon discovered itself by my outward conduct. Ungodly company, and the gratification of sense, became my only enjoyments, in which I could indulge, free from those strong convictions of guilt and dreadful apprehensions of future misery which retirement and calm reflection impose upon the mind. Soon after this change took place, I was left guardian to a young lady, whose fortune was committed to my care; but I expended her money, and ruined her reputation. Still I was sensible how far preferable a virtuous life was to a wicked one, and I was careful to instruct my children in the principles of religion. When I returned one evening from my sinful pursuits, I asked them, as usual, if they could repeat their lesson. 'Yes,' said the youngest, 'and I have a lesson for you too, papa.' She then read Ezek. xxiv. 13:—'Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused My fury to rest upon thee.' This I considered was to seal my doom, and I now have nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment."[d]

15—17. (15) **simple**, in the bad sense: ch. i. 22. He is credulous, does not give due heed, so is easily deceived. **looketh well**, pondereth, considereth, formeth good and wise judgments.[a] (16) **feareth**, suspecteth danger. **rageth**, *etc.*, acts proudly and conceitedly; rushes recklessly forward into mischief. (17) **soon angry**, lit. *short of anger;* hastily angry.[b] **foolishly**, gets himself into many and needless troubles. **wicked devices**, who deliberately plots and plans evil. **hated**, surely gains the enmity of those whom he seeks to injure.

Xerxes.—Xerxes crowned his footman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day; and Andronicus, the Greek Emperor, crowned his admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon. Roffensis had a cardinal's hat sent to him, but his head was cut off before it came to hand. Most say of their crowns, as a certain king said

S. Cellerier, ii. 277; *J. Jowett*, 253.

v. 13. *Bp. Abernethy*, 312; *Dr. H. Blair*, v. 247; *W. Reading*, iv. 242.

v. 14. *T. Manton*, iv. 1108; *Dr. B. Ibbot*, i. 68; *Dr. T. Coney*, i. 29; *P. Pyle*, iii. 201; *T. Newman*, i. 245; *T. Coyte*, ii. 35; *W. Mason*, iv. 13; *J. H. Gurney*, 264.

"For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."—*Pope.*

"Folly consists in the drawing of false conclusions from just principles, by which it is distinguished from madness, which draws just conclusions from false principles."—*Locke.*

"Bow to no patron's insolence; rely on no frail hopes, in freedom live and die."—*Seneca.*

d R. T. S.

a Pr. xxii. 3.

b "Foams up quickly, flies into passion."—*Zöckler.*

v. 15. *Dr. W. Dodwell*, ii. 137; *J. Mason*, i. 79; *W. Gresley*, 167.

v. 16. *Dr. W. Paley*, i. 10.

"No man should so act as to take advantage of another's folly."—*Cicero.*

"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die." —*Young.*

of his. "Oh, crown! more noble than happy!" It was a just complaint which long ago was made against the heathen gods, *O faciles dare summa deos eademque tueri difficiles!* They could give their favourites great gifts, but they could not maintain them in the possession of them.

18, 19. (18) simple, as *v.* 15. crowned with, or gather wisdom around them. (19) bow before, *etc.*, this *v.* suggests the humbling of the wicked by the punishment their sins incur. With possible allusion to the *crowning* of the good in the previous verse. at the gates, as if they were supplicant beggars.[a]

Volney.—Volney, the infidel, while prosecuting his philosophical discoveries in North America, had taken a passage, with about twenty other persons, in a vessel from one part of the extensive lake Ontario to another. He was very communicative, allowed no opportunity to escape of ridiculing Christianity, and behaved altogether in a very profane manner. In the course of the voyage, a tremendous storm came on: the schooner struck upon a shoal or rock at a considerable distance from an inaccessible shore, and continued to beat so violently that they expected every moment that she would go to pieces: in which case their destruction would have been inevitable. In this awful situation the vain philosopher literally lost all the powers of reason. One moment he was quite frantic, and raged like a madman; another, in wild consternation, he looked into some of Voltaire's works, which he generally carried in his bosom; then despair took hold on him, and he uttered the most incoherent expressions, and offered a large sum of money to the captain, to prevail on him to attempt what was utterly impossible, namely, to put him ashore in a small boat. In all his misery he had a companion in the cook, who lashed himself to the foremast, and then, in the greatest agony of despair, uttered the most horrid imprecations. The vessel held together in that situation for above two hours, when the wind shifted about, and they got off, and arrived safely at the place of their destination. After the storm, Volney showed himself no less weak, in requesting several of the passengers not to mention his behaviour on this awful occasion.[b]

"Alfonsus, king of Castile, used to employ his leisure hours in the study of astronomy. Having discovered what he supposed to be an irregularity, he said, "If I had been by when the Maker of the world was at work, I could have given Him some good advice."

b R. T. S.

20, 21. (20) hated, repelled as disagreeable, obnoxious, troublesome.[a] Comp., however, *v.* 21. rich . . friends, *Heb.* "many are the lovers of the rich;" partly satirical. Many are those willing to be friends for the sake of what can be got out of them. (21) despiseth . . sinneth, whether he be poor or rich, our neighbour should be to us an object of interest and love. mercy . . poor, *comp. v.* 20, for the contrast.[b] happy is he, finding for himself how charity is twice blessed: it blesses him who gives and him who takes.

Howard and the countess.—The eminently great and good Howard, the philanthropist, neither wanted courage nor talent to administer reproof where he thought it was needed. A German count, governor of Upper Austria, with his countess, called one day on the man who had excited so large a share of the public attention. The count asked him the state of the prisons within his department. Mr. Howard replied: "The worst in all Germany;" and advised that the countess should visit the

a "How did the 260 souls bow before Paul, the prisoner, amidst the dangers of the storm on the Adriatic Sea! He became the moral commander of all on board as the perils thickened around them."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

a "Few maxims in the book jar so upon our feelings as this, and yet it does but represent the generalisation of a wide experience. We seem to hear what worldly moralisers have repeated in a hundred forms."—*Spk. Com.*

b "A beneficent person is like a fountain watering the earth, and spreading fertility; it is

female prisoners. "I," said she, haughtily; "I go into prisons!" and rapidly hastened downstairs in great anger. Howard, indignant at her proud and unfeeling disposition, loudly called after her, "Madam, remember that you are a woman yourself; and you must soon, like the most miserable female prisoner in a dungeon, inhabit but a small space of that earth from which you equally originated."[c]

22, 23. (22) err, *i.e.* wander fr. the ways of righteousness. devise, in their minds. Wickedness of heart surely finds its expression in wicked wandering ways. The word used lit. means, *carve out.* mercy and truth, God's manifestations of Himself to them. (23) labour, diligent activity.[a] talk of the lips, talk, and nothing else; talk that is not associated with work.[b]

Cyrus a gardener.—When Lysander, a Lacedemonian general, brought magnificent presents to Cyrus, he was shown, and much admired, the royal gardens. Cyrus told him, in answer to his inquiries, that he had himself drawn and entirely marked out the plan of the gardens, and had planted many of the trees with his own hands. "What!" exclaimed Lysander, with astonishment, and viewing Cyrus from head to foot, "is it possible that, with those purple robes and splendid vestments, those strings of jewels and bracelets of gold, those buskins so richly embroidered,—is it possible that you could play the gardener, and employ your royal hands in planting trees?" "Does that surprise you?" said Cyrus: "I assure you that, when my health permits, I never sit down to my table without having fatigued myself, either in military exercise, rural labour, or some other toilsome employment, to which I apply myself with pleasure." Lysander, still more amazed, pressed Cyrus by the hand, and said, "You are truly happy, and deserve your high fortune, since you unite it with virtue."

24. crown . . riches, either meaning, "the well-earned possessions of the wise become his honour, are a real adornment to him, for wh. he is with good reason praised:"[a] or "The crown, *i.e.* the glory, of the wise man constitutes his wealth. He alone is truly rich even as he alone is truly king."[b] is folly, however it be associated, either with riches or with poverty, it is folly; you can make nothing else of it.[c]

A rich fool.—

Thee, senseless stock, because thou'rt richly gilt,
The blinded people without cause admire,
And superstition impiously hath built
Altars to that which should have been the fire.

Where shall my tongue consent to worship thee,
Since all's not gold that glisters and is fair?
Carving but makes an image of a tree:
But gods of images are made by prayer.

Sabean incense, in a fragrant cloud
Illustriously suspended o'er thy crown
Like a king's canopy, makes thee allow'd
For more than man. But let them take thee down,
And thy true value be once understood,
Thy dull idolaters will find thou'rt wood.[d]

therefore more delightful and more honourable to give than to receive." — *Epicurus.*

c Cheever.

a "It is only by labour that thought can be made healthy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity." —*Ruskin.*

b "He that is lavish in words is a niggard in deeds. The shuttle, the needle, the spade, the brush, the chisel, all are still but the tongue." —*Sir W. Raleigh.*

v. 22. *Dr. A. B. Evans*, 349.

"To be truly and really independent, is to support ourselves by our own exertions."—*Porter.*

a Zöckler.

b Spk. Com.

c "Why, was it not foolishness before they were rich? Yes, but now it has become egregious foolishness."—*Trapp.*

v. 24. *E. Waple*, i. 65; *C. Chais*, ii. 294; *Dr. W. Stevens*, ii. 239.

"Men leave their riches either to their kindred or their friends, and moderate portions prosper best in both."—*Bacon.*

d Fanshawe.

"Nothing hides a blemish so completely as cloth of gold."—*Hare.*

25—27. (25) **true witness**, *v.* 5. **speaketh lies**, the mischievous influence of wh. is sure to be discovered.[a] (26) **strong confidence**, or sense of security. They have God on their side.[b] **his children**, another term for those who fear God. It is more natural to refer this to Jehovah's worshippers than to the children of the pious. (27) **fountain**, *etc.*, ch. xiii. 14, also x. 11.

The source of true confidence (*v.* 26).—I. In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence. 1. Fear of God includes inward and outward religion: 2. Such religion inspires the soul with confidence; 3. With confidence at all times, poverty, sickness, persecution, temptation, etc. II. And His children have a place of refuge. 1. Here in the mercy and favour of God; 2. Hereafter in the heavenly world.[c]

Reproof with tact.—A number of gay young persons got up a ball in a neighbourhood in which Dr. Nettleton of America had been preaching with great success, and, for the amusement of themselves and others, inserted the reverend gentleman's name at the head of the list of managers. The company assembled at the time appointed. About the hour for commencing the dance, Dr. Nettleton made his appearance, and observed to the company that he perceived, from the tickets that had been issued, that he had been appointed a manager, and therefore he proposed to open the services with prayer. He then offered up a very affecting prayer for the thoughtless group; which was blessed of God to the conviction of a number of those present, several of whom afterwards made a profession of religion, united with the church, and were never afterwards found within the walls of a ball-room.[d]

28, 29. (28) **multitude of people**, in contrast with mere pomp, conquest, or gorgeous array. The true glory is a numerous, prosperous, and happy people.[a] (29) **slow to wrath**,[b] not suddenly roused to passion, able to command his own spirit. Comp. *soon angry*, *v.* 17. **hasty of spirit**, Heb. *short of spirit*.[c] **exalteth folly**, by giving passion the throne and sceptre, and placing the soul under her capricious and violent dominion: exalts, or lifts up in the gaze of men.

Sir Isaac Newton and his dog.—Sir Isaac Newton's temper, it is said, was so equal and mild, that no accident could disturb it; a remarkable instance of which is related as follows:—Sir Isaac had a favourite little dog, which he called Diamond. Being one evening called out of his study into the next room, Diamond was left behind. When Sir Isaac returned, having been absent but a few minutes, he had the mortification to find that Diamond had overturned a lighted candle among some papers, the nearly finished labour of many years, which were soon in flames, and almost consumed to ashes. This loss, from Newton's advanced age, was irreparable; but, without at all punishing the dog, he exclaimed, "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, you little know the mischief you have done!"[d]

30. **sound heart**, "one in wh. all emotions and appetites are in a healthy equilibrium. The contrast with this is the envy wh. eats, like a consuming disease, into the very bones and marrow of a man's moral life."[a] **envy**,[b] which has no rest; here passion, violent excitement in general, is meant.

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a "It is prob. that the intended antithesis relates not so much to the *actual fact* of truth saving and falsehood condemning, as to the *dispositions and intentions* of the faithful witness on the one hand, and the lying witness on the other. The faithful witness delights in giving testimony that will save life, that will be salutary, beneficial to his fellow-creatures." — *Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b "Creature extremity can never reach beyond the help of omnipotence." — *Nicholls.*

Hab. iii. 17—19.

c *Sigma* in 400*c* Sks.

d *Whitecross.*

a "This is the teaching of a true political economy." — *Fausset.*

"It is the wisdom of princes, by a mild and gentle government, by encouraging trade and husbandry, and by making all easy under them, to promote the increase of their people." — *Mat. Henry.*

b Nu. xii. 3; 1 Pe. ii. 21—23.

c Matt. v. 22; Eph. iv. 26, 27, 31; Ja. i. 19.

d *R. T. S.*

a *Syk. Com.*

b Ja. iii. 16. "A fretful, envious, discontented spirit, is its own punish-

Envy destructive.—When a statue had been erected by his fellow-citizens of Thasos, to Theogenes, a celebrated victor in one of the public games of Greece, we are told that it excited so strongly the envious hatred of one of his rivals, that he went to it every night, and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows, till, at last, unfortunately successful, he was able to move it from its pedestal, and was crushed to death beneath it on its fall. This, if we consider the self-consuming misery of envy, is truly what happens to every envious man. He may, perhaps, throw down his rival's glory; but he is crushed in his whole soul beneath the glory which he overturns.[c]

ment; it consumes the flesh, prays upon the animal spirits, makes the countenance pale, and is the rottenness of the bones."—*Mat. Henry.*

c Dr. Brown.

31. oppresseth, *comp.* term "mocketh" in ch. xvii. 5. All kinds of injuries done to the poor are included: all forms in which positions of power and authority are used for unjust, tyrannical, or unbrotherly ends. **his Maker,** *i.e.* the Maker of the poor; regarded as having appointed his lot.[a] **honoureth . . poor,** better read, "He that hath mercy on the poor[b] honoureth Him," *i.e.* God.

Godliness and inhumanity (*v.* 31).—Godliness and humanity are essentially one. The text teaches—I. That inhumanity is ungodliness. Oppression of the poor is a reproach of God—1. By disregarding that identity of nature with which our Maker has endowed all classes; 2. By disregarding those laws which our Maker has enjoined respecting the poor. II. True humanity is godliness.[c]

Humanity.—When the Romans had ravaged the province of Azazane, and 7,000 Persians were brought to Armida, where they suffered extreme want, Acases, the bishop of that city, observed, that as God said, "I love mercy better than sacrifice," He would certainly be better pleased with the relief of His suffering creatures, than with being served with gold and silver in their churches. The clergy were of the same opinion. The consecrated vessels were sold, and with the proceeds the 7,000 Persians were not only maintained during the war, but sent home at its conclusion with money in their pockets. Varenes, the Persian monarch, was so charmed with this humane action, that he invited the bishop to his capital, where he received him with the utmost reverence, and for his sake conferred many favours on the Christians.[d]

a Matt. xxv. 40; also 1 Sa. ii. 8; Job xxxi. 13—15; Ps. cxiii. 7; Pr. xxii. 2.

b Mat. xi. 5, xxvi. 11; Ja. ii. 5.

c Dr. Thomas.

"True humanity consists not in a squeamish ear; it consists not in starting or shrinking at tales of misery, but in a disposition of heart to relieve it. True humanity appertains rather to the mind than to the nerves, and prompts men to use real and active endeavours to execute the actions which it suggests."—*Charles James Fox.*

d Whitecross.

32. driven away, by a violent death.[a] **in his wickedness,** with all its burdens and penalties upon him. Continued wickedness is not remedial but destructive. **hope . . death,** of a gracious Div. presence and help.[b] The poetical parallelism of the verse is preserved by rendering "In his misfortune (or adversity) the wicked is overthrown, but the righteous has confidence even in his death."[c]

A contrast (*v.* 32).—We have here two deaths. I. The death of the wicked. 1. In his wickedness, died as he lived, resolutions of amendment unfulfilled, not a death-bed penitent; 2. Driven away, compelled to go, notwithstanding all his reluctance; 3. Driven away in his wickedness. II. The death of the righteous. 1. He has hope in the Divine presence; 2. He has the hope of immediate admission into glory; 3. Of a blessed resurrection; 4. And of a glorious immortality. Note—(1) We must all die; (2) Death shall not wear the same aspect to all.[d]—*The hope of the*

a Ps. xxxv. 5, 6, xxxvi. 12, lxii. 3, lxxiii. 18, 19.

b "The hope wh. abides even 'in death' must, like that of the Psalmist, look beyond it."—*Spk. Com.* "A clear testimony (at time of death) of a future state of rewards and punishments. Comp. Job xix. 25—27; Ps. xvi. 12, xvii. 16, xxiii. 4; Eccl. xii. 14."—*Wordsworth.*

righteous in death (*v.* 32).—I. Consider the character of the persons who are said to have hope in their death. 1. Every true believer is righteous according to the covenant of grace; 2. They have also an inherent righteousness wrought in them by the Holy Spirit; 3. They endeavour to be actually righteous in their imitation of Christ. II. A few of the things that the righteous hope for in their dying moments. 1. They hope to have the gracious presence of God with them in that solemn hour of death: 2. They hope for immediate admission into heaven: 3. They hope for the resurrection of their bodies to a glorious immortality; 4. They have hope of eternal life, of the complete salvation of their entire nature, of the reunion of soul and body, and of being for ever with the Lord amid all the glories of the heavenly state.

The scoffer's death.—A remarkable coincidence was narrated to us a short time since by an intelligent, wealthy gentleman of this city, now living and well known and highly esteemed in business circles. He was a professor of religion, and had been led to think of his soul's affairs by seeing a friend on his death-bed deprived of reason, and in his delirium cursing and swearing, a thing he never did when he was in health. Our friend once occupied a desk in the same counting-room on the wharf, with a man much older than himself, and who was a coarse, profane atheist—quite disposed to make others like himself. One night, as they were about shutting up, this man took our informant by the jacket, and said flippantly that he was surprised "such a clever fellow as he should believe in religion," using some very blasphemous expression. To a request that he would abstain from such language he repeated some of his profane slang, and to a remark that "if such notions might do to live by, they would not do to die by, he said, "I'll venture that!" "I think you would have some fears," replied his friend, "if it should be said to you, 'Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee.'" "I am ready!" said the scoffer, pointing and looking upward. They parted. The profane man turned the corner of the street to go one way, and his friend went in the opposite direction. Within one minute after they separated the former fell dead upon the side walk![e]

33. **resteth**, contrast with the words "made known" in the second clause. On these terms the point of the verse rests. In the one case wisdom is preserved in quietness and silence, without forwardness or boastfulness; in the other it is noisy and boastful. The half-learned are always the foremost to make show of their knowledge.[a]

Reticence and loquacity (*v.* 33).—I. That reticence is often a mark of wisdom, not always: sometimes a sign of stupidity, sometimes of sulkiness. Two things tend to this. 1. Humility; 2. Conscientiousness. II. That loquacity is ever an indication of folly.[b]

Advice to talkers.—The Rev. Mr. Burridge being visited by a very loquacious young lady, who engrossed all the conversation of the interview with small talk concerning herself, when she arose to retire, he said, "Madam, before you withdraw, I have one piece of advice to give you; and that is, when you go into company again, after you have talked half an hour without intermission, I recommend it to you to stop awhile, and see if any other of the company has anything to say."

c Rucetschi.

d G. Brooks.

"I am sick, not to death, but to life."—*Myconius.* "I am almost well."—*Richard Baxter.* "Mercy is triumphant."—*Dr. Rive.* "I shall be the most glorious instance of sovereign grace in all heaven."—*Rev. Thomas Walter.* "My hope is in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ."—*Fisher Ames.*

Bishop Hooper, to one that tendered a pardon upon recantation, said—"If you love my soul, away with it: if you love my soul, away with it." One of the commissioners prayed him to consider that life is sweet and death is bitter. "True," said he, "but the death to come is more bitter, and the life to come is more sweet."

e American S. S. World.

a "Fools carry their wisdom, wh. is however in fact only folly, always upon their tongues, and seek most assiduously to make it known. The expression is pointed and ironical, and yet not for that reason unintelligible."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"Learn to hold thy tongue. Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence."—*Fuller.*

34, 35. (34) **righteousness**, a designedly comprehensive word, meaning all just principles and actions. "Religious and moral rectitude in every relation and direction."[a] **exalteth**, *i.e.* it involves, and leads to, a general elevation and advancement of the condition of the people. **a reproach**, or brings on them the ill-will of others. It surely brings a nation into reproach. (35) **wise**, in sense of discreet, statesmanlike. Or we may take wise in the sense of the prev. *v.* as nourishing the righteousness of the nation.[b] **causeth shame**, or the base.

The political and social importance of morality (*vv.* 34, 35).—I. The political importance of morality. 1. Rectitude exalts a nation, in material wealth, in social enjoyments, in moral power; 2. Unrighteousness degrades a nation. II. The social importance of morality. 1. Men who are ruled by righteousness are the men most to be valued in a country; 2. The promotion of true morality is the best way to promote the interests of a State.[c]

A State.—

What constitutes a State?
Not high-raised battlements, or laboured mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crowned,
Nor bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Nor starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No! men,—high-minded men.[d]

England.—

Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streamers, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!
Happy Britannia! where the queen of Arts,
Inspiring vigour, liberty abroad,
Walks unconfined, even to the farthest cots,
And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.
Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime;
Thy streams unfailing in the summer's drought,
Unmatch'd thy guardian oaks, thy valleys float
With golden waves; and on the mountains flocks
Bleat numberless; while rove around their sides,
Below, the blackening herds in lusty droves.
Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unquell'd
Against the mower's scythe. On every hand
Thy villas shine, thy country teems with wealth,
And property assures it to the swain,
Pleased and unwearied, in his garden toil.
Filled are thy cities with the sons of Art,
And trade and joy, in every busy street,
Mingling, are heard: even Drudgery himself,
As at the car he sweats, or dusty hews
The palace stone, looks gay; thy crowded ports,
Where rising masts an endless prospect yield,
With labour burn, and echo to the shouts
Of hurried sailor, as he hearty waves
His last adieu, and, loosening every sheet,
Resigns the spreading vessel to the wind.

a A righteous administration of the government; impartial equity between man and man; public countenance given to religion; the general practice and profession of virtue; the protecting and preserving of virtuous men; charity and compassion to strangers,—these exalt a nation, uphold the throne, and elevate the people.

b Da. vi. 1–3; Mat. xxv. 21; Luke xii. 37. "Whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right."—*Burke.*

c Dr. Thomas.

d Sir W. Jones.

"*Physical glories of Great Britain.*—This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle, this earth of majesty, this seat of Mars, this other Eden, demi-paradise, this fortress, built by Nature for herself, against infection, and the hand of war; this happy breed of men, this little world, this precious stone set in the silver sea, which serves it in the office of a wall, or as a moat defensive to a house, against the envy of less happier lands; this nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings, fear'd for their breed, and famous by their birth, renowned for their deeds, as far from home, for Christian service and true chivalry."—*Shakespeare.*

"My precept to all who build is, that the owner should be an ornament to the house, and not the house to the owner." —*Cicero.*

"To Adam Paradise was home. To the good among his descendants home is Paradise." —*Hare.*

Bold, firm, and graceful are thy generous youth,
Scattering the nations where they go, and first
Or on the lifted plain, or stormy seas.
Mild are thy glories, too, as o'er the plains
Of thriving peace thy thoughtful fires preside
In genius and substantial learning high.
For every virtue, every worth renown'd;
Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind:
Yet, like the mustering thunder, when provoked,
The dread of tryants, and the sole resource
Of those that under grim oppression groan.[e]

e Thompson.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **soft**, gentle, soothing, quieting.[a] **turneth**, *etc.*, or beateth down, so as to damp and put out the fires. Opposite to "stirreth it up," makes the flame of wrath flash and blaze up. **grievous**, or irritating: including passionate words and spiteful words. "Rather than lose a jest some will lose a friend."[b] (2) **aright**, *i.e.* in attractive and useful ways. **foolishness**, "in its repulsively confused and noisy utterances brings to view not wisdom and true discernment, but only folly."[c] **poureth forth**, or bubbleth out in a way that disgusts those who listen.

The use and abuse of knowledge.—"What au excellent thing is knowledge!" said a sharp-looking, bustling little man to one who was much older than himself. "Knowledge is an excellent thing," repeated he: "my boys know more at six and seven years old than I did at twelve. They can read all sorts of books, and talk on all sorts of subjects. The world is a great deal wiser than it used to be. Everybody knows something of everything now. Do you not think, sir, that knowledge is an excellent thing?" "Why, sir," replied the old man, looking grave, "that depends entirely on the use to which it is applied. It may be a blessing or a curse. Knowledge is only an increase of power, and power may be a bad as well as a good thing." "That is what I cannot understand," said the bustling little man. "How can power be a bad thing?" "I will tell you," meekly replied the old man, and thus went on: "When the power of a horse is under restraint the animal is useful, bearing burdens, drawing loads, and carrying his master; but when that power is unrestrained the horse breaks his bridle, dashes the carriage that he draws to pieces, or throws his rider." "I see! I see!" said the little man. "When the water of a large pond is properly conducted by trenches it renders the fields around fertile; but when it bursts through its banks it sweeps everything before it, and destroys the produce of the field." "I see! I see!" said the little man, "I see!" "When a ship is steered aright, the sail that she hoists up enables her the sooner to get into port; but if steered wrong, the more sail she carries the further will she go out of her course." "I see! I see!" said the little man, "I see clearly!" "Well, then," continued the old man, "if you see these things so clearly, I hope you can see, too, that knowledge, to be a good thing, must be rightly applied. God's grace in the heart will render the knowledge of the head a blessing, but without this it may prove to us no better than a curse."[d]

a "Therefore be not sullen and silent, but give an answer, and let it be a gentle one."—*Lord Bacon.*

Ju. viii. 1—3; contrast xii. 1–3. "There never was a truer maxim than that it requires the consent of two persons to make a quarrel; a soft word, a seasonable explanation, often turns aside wrath, and sometimes prevents the most serious wars that threaten to devastate the world." —*Alison.*

b Mat. Henry.

"At any rate gentle words will preserve your innocence, give you the deserved reputation of wisdom and moderation, and keep up the serenity and composure of your mind. Passion and anger make a man unfit for everything that becomes him as a man or as a Christian." —*Sir Mat. Hale.*

c O. Zöckler.

d Leaflets.

3. **eyes . . place**, so we may associate the immediate Divine approval, or disapproval, with all our words and works.[a] **beholding**, taking note; watching as a spy.[b]

Omniscience (*v.* 3).—I. God's inspection is thorough. 1. He sees the thoughts; 2. He appreciates the motives. II. God's inspection is universal. 1. No hiding-place from His eyes; 2. No escape from His notice. III. God's inspection is personal. 1. The good shall be encouraged; 2. The sinner should take warning; 3. All should be circumspect.[c]

One way forgot.—A man who was in the habit of going to a neighbour's corn-field to steal the grain, one day took his son with him, a boy eight years of age. The father told him to hold the bag, while he looked if any one was near to see him. After standing on the fence, and peeping through all the corn-rows, he returned to take the bag from the child, and began his sinful work, "Father," said the boy, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The man dropped the bag in a fright, and said, "Which way, child?" supposing he had seen some one. "You forgot to look up to the sky, to see if God was noticing you." The father felt this reproof of the child so much, that he left the corn, returned home, and never again ventured to steal: remembering the truth his child had taught him, that the eye of God always beholds us.[d]

4, 5. (4) **wholesome tongue**,[a] one that soothes and heals with pacifying and gentle language. Comp. term "sound" in ch. xiv. 30. **tree of life**, *see* ch. iii. 18, xi. 30. **perverseness**, *i.e.* cross, ill-natured, irritating language. **breach**, *etc.*,[b] it makes a breach; it grieves instead of appeasing. (5) **a fool**, Ps. xiv. 1. **despiseth**, *etc.*,[c] ch. x. 1. **is prudent**, acts discreetly. Exactly what the fool does *not* do.

Speech of the wise and of the foolish (*vv.* 4, 7).—I. The speech of the wise—1. Is healing; 2. Living; 3. Enlightening. II. The speech of the foolish—1. Is wounding; 2. Empty.—*Diverse families* (*v.* 5).—I. There is filial folly and filial wisdom. 1. Filial folly: a father's instruction is that of authority, of experience, of love; 2. Filial wisdom to regard reproof is—(1) To avoid the evils of life; (2) The best means to attain the possible good. II. There is enjoyable riches and troublesome wealth. 1. There is enjoyable riches; 2. Troublesome wealth.[d]

A young man.—A pious young man told a clergyman that having once disobeyed his father, the good man retired into his room, and shut the door. Curiosity led him to look through the key-hole, and he saw his father on his knees. He listened also, and heard his father praying for him. Struck to the heart, he went away and prayed for himself; and had good reason to hope their united prayers were heard.[e]—*Children educating themselves.*—There is a branch of useful training which cannot be too heedfully regarded; I mean the education that children give themselves. Their observation is ever alive and awake to the circumstances which pass around them; and from the circumstances thus observed, they are continually drawing their own conclusions. These observations and conclusions have a powerful influence in forming the character of youth. What is imparted in the way of direct instruction, they are apt to consider as official; they receive it often with downright suspicion; generally, perhaps, with a sort of undefined qualification and

a "So live with men as considering always that God sees thee. Do nothing which thou wouldest not have God see done."—*Bp. Henshaw.*

2 Chr. xvi. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 1; Mat. x. 30; He. iv. 13.

b Comp. the different tone of Mat. v. 45.

c *W. W. Whythe.*

d *R. T. S.*

a "Including the ideas of 'tranquil' and 'placable.'"—*Spk. Com.*

b "Disturbance and destruction by restless passion of the regulated and normal state of the spirit. See Is. lxv. 14.—*O. Zöckler.*

"Perverseness in the tongue is like a blustering wind among the boughs of the trees, rending and tearing the life and spirit of a man's self and others."—*Bp. Hall.*

c Ex. xx. 12; Eph. vi. 1, 2.

d *Dr. Thomas.*

e *R. T. S.*

"By directing a child's attention to a fault, and thus giving it a local habitation and a name, you may often fix it in him more firmly; when, by drawing his thoughts

and affections to other things, and seeking to foster an opposite grace you would be much more likely to subdue it. In like manner a jealous disposition is often strengthened when notice is taken of it, while the endeavour to cherish a spirit of love would do much toward casting it out."—*Hare.*

f Bp. Jebb.

a "Too often there is guilt and a curse; there is pride and passion, and envy, and contention, and those are troublesome lusts, which rob them of the joy of their revenues, and make them troublesome to their neighbours."—*Mat. Henry.*

Ec. iv. 6, v. 12—14.

b Not sound, not right.

c Cheever.

"Many children grow up like plants under bell-glasses. They are surrounded only by artificial and prepared influences. They are house-bred, room-bred, nurse-bred, mother-bred,—everything but self-bred. The object of training is to teach the child to take care of himself: but many parents use their children only as a kind of spool on which to reel off their own experience; and they are bound and corded until they perish by inanity, or

reserve. It is otherwise with what children discover for themselves. As matter of self-acquisition, this is treasured up, and reasoned upon; it penetrates the mind, and influences the conduct, beyond all the formal lectures that ever were delivered. Whether it be for good, or whether it be for evil, the education of the child is principally derived from its own observation of the actions, the words, the voice, the looks, of those with whom it lives. The fact is unquestionably so; and since the fact is so, it is impossible, surely, that the friends of youth can be too circumspect in the youthful presence to avoid every (and the least appearance of) evil. This great moral truth was keenly felt, and powerfully inculcated, even in the heathen world. But the reverence for youth of Christian parents ought to reach immeasurably further. It is not enough that they set no bad example; it is indispensable that they show forth a good one. It is not enough that they seem virtuous; it is indispensable that they be so.*f*

6, 7. (6) much treasure, "the treasure stored up in such a house is the righteousness that prevails in it, a source and pledge of abiding prosperity." revenues .. trouble, *i.e.* their very gains become sources of vexation.*a* (7) disperse, *Ruetschi* suggests the rendering, "sift or winnow knowledge," separating the chaff from the grain. They have the true critical spirit. not so,*b* a simple declaration of contrast. An expressive suggestion of the mighty differences between the influences that go forth from the wise man and from the fool.

Cato and Marius Curius.—Cato, a pattern of moderation, was very early taught the happy art of contentment by the following circumstance:—Near his country seat was a cottage, formerly belonging to Marius Curius, who was thrice honoured with a triumph. Cato often walked thither, and reflecting on the smallness of the farm and the meanness of the dwelling, used to meditate on the peculiar virtues of the man who, though he was the most illustrious character in Rome, had subdued the fiercest nations, and driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, cultivated this little spot of ground with his own hands, and after three triumphs retired to his own cottage. Here the ambassadors of the Samnites found him in the chimney-corner dressing turnips, and offered him a large present of gold: but he absolutely refused it, remarking, "A man who can be satisfied with such a supper, has no need of gold; and I think it more glorious to conquer the possessors of it, than to possess it myself." Full of these thoughts, Cato returned home; and taking a view of his own estate, his servants, and his manner of life, increased his labour and retrenched his expenses.*c*—*Obedience and knowledge.*—We learn from hence the most effectual way and means of proficiency and growth in the knowledge of the great and profound truths of religion, and how to make us all not only good Christians, but also expert divines. It is a knowledge that men are not so much to study as to live themselves into, a knowledge that passes into the head through the heart. I have heard of some that in their latter years, through the feebleness of their limbs, have been forced to study upon their knees; and I think it might well become the youngest and the strongest to do so too. Let them daily and incessantly pray to God for His grace: and if God gives grace, they may be sure that knowledge will not stay long behind; since it is the same spirit and principle that purifies

the heart and clarifies the understanding. . . . If the heart be piously disposed, the natural goodness of any doctrine is enough to vouch for the truth of it; for the suitableness of it will endear it to the will, and by endearing it to the will, will naturally slide it into the assent also. For in morals, as well as in metaphysics, there is nothing really good but has a truth commensurate to its goodness. The truths of Christ crucified are the Christian's philosophy, and a good life is the Christian's logic—that great instrumental, introductive art, that must guide the mind into the former. And where a long course of piety and close communion with God have purged the heart, and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit, knowledge will break in upon such a soul, like the sun shining in its full might, with such a victorious light, that nothing shall be able to resist it. If now, at length, some should object here, that from what has been delivered, it will follow that the most pious men are still the most knowing, which yet seems contrary to common experience and observation, I answer, that as to all things directly conducing and necessary to salvation, there is no doubt but they are so; as the meanest common soldier, that has fought often in an army, has truer and better knowledge of war than he that has read and writ whole volumes of it, but never was in any battle. Practical sciences are not to be learned but in the way of action. It is experience that must give knowledge in the Christian profession, as well as in all others. And the knowledge drawn from experience is quite of another kind from that which flows from speculation or discourse. It is not the opinion, but the path of the just, that the wisest of men tells us shines more and more unto a perfect day.[d]

8, 9. (8) **abomination**, *etc.*,[a] bcc. however costly the sacrifice may be, it is only a *thing*, and God accepts the heart that finds expression for its love and trust by the *things* it gives and does.[b] (9) **way of the wicked**,[c] the walk or conversation: the conduct so far as it is based on the wrong principle of serving self. **loveth**, *etc.*, regardeth with favour, and giveth to such the sense of acceptance with Him. **followeth after**, searcheth after, pursueth; a term indicating earnestness and intensity.

The upright alone acceptable to God (*v.* 8).—I. The truths here asserted. 1. The abomination to the Lord; 2. The delight of the Lord. II. Some obvious deductions from them. 1. That God's views of sin are widely different from those of man: 2. That the provisions of the Gospel are admirably suited to our necessities.[d]

God's view of sin.—You have seen the body of an insect accommodated to the surprising instrument [a microscope]. When in this situation the animal was pricked by a very fine needle: your eye, your naked eye, just perceived the puncture, and discovered, perhaps, a speck of moisture oozing from the orifice. But in what manner were they represented by the magnifying instrument? *Theron:* The puncture was widened into a frightful gash. The speck of moisture swelled into a copious stream, and flowed like a torrent from the gaping wound. An ox under the sacrificing knife scarce looks more bulky or bleeds more largely. *Aspasio:* Don't you apprehend my design? If we, shortsighted mortals, and almost blinded with self-love, break all bonds and cords, and rush to ruin by reaction."—*Beecher.*

"The tasks set to children should be moderate. Over-exertion is hurtful both physically and intellectually, and even morally. But it is of the utmost importance that they should be made to fulfil all their tasks correctly and punctually. This will train them for an exact and conscientious discharge of their duties in after life."—*Hare.*

"That's true plenty, not to have, but not to want riches."—*Chrysostom.*

d South.

a "Even the costly sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, and even the prayer of the righteous, the breath of his lips (contrasted with the steam of the sumptuous sacrifice)—is His delight."—*Burgon.*

b 1 Sa. xv. 22; Isa. i. 11, lxi. 8, lxvi. 3; Je. vi. 20, vii. 22; Am. v. 22.

c Ge. iv. 3—5; Is. xxix. 13, 14; Mat. xv. 8, 9.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Hervey.

"When a lady once told Archbishop Sharpe that she would not communicate religious instruction to her children until they

had attained the years of discretion, the shrewd prelate replied, 'Madam, if you do not teach them, the devil will!'"—*J. Whitecross.*

a 2 Chr. xxv. 16.

b Job xxvi. 6; Ps. cxxxix.

c "Our inward disposition is the life of our actions; according to that doth the God of spirits judge us, while men censure according to our external motions."—*Bp. Hall.*

Je. xvii. 9, 10; 1 Jno. iii. 20.

v. 11. *D. Wilcox*, i. 214; *J. S. Vernedi*, i. 1; *Beddome*, 6; *R. A. Suckling*, 261; *A. B. Evans*, *Lect. on Job*, 97.

d Rev. W. J. Bolton.

"If a boy is not trained to endure and to bear trouble, he will grow up a girl; and a boy that is a girl has all a girl's weakness without any of her regal qualities. A woman made out of a woman is God's noblest work; a woman made out of a man is His meanest. A child rightly brought up will be like a willow branch, which, broken off and touching the ground, at once takes root. Bring up your children so that they will root easily in their own soil, and not for ever be grafted into your old trunk and boughs."—*H. W. Beecher.*

e J. Hutchinson.

if we cannot but be sensible of our faults, how flagrant must they appear, in what enormous magnitude, and with what aggravating circumstances, to an Eye perfectly pure and infinitely penetrating.[e]

10, 11. (10) correction, *etc.*, better rend. "There is a grievous correction," etc., *i.e.* so sharp as to be "nothing less than death." the way, that right way wh. God marks out for him. hateth reproof,[a] wh. might help to keep him in the way. (11) hell, Heb. *Sheol.* De. xxxii. 22. destruction, Heb. *Abaddon*, the abyss, the place of the destroyer:[b] a synonym for Sheol, not another and distinct place. Comp. ch. xxvii. 20. hearts, *etc.*, wh. seemed to the writer an easier thing to sound and know than the depths of hell.[c]

Kindness to God's creatures.—The boy who begins by spinning cockchafers and tormenting cats gradually gets on to delight in cruelty to his fellows, and at last is a Nero in all but his power to cause suffering. There was a lad strolling through the fields with his sister. They found a nest of rabbits. The sister was charmed with the nest itself, and with its living occupants; but the lad seized them, mimicking their squeaks and their struggles. In vain his sister wept and entreated: he flung them up into the air, and shouted as each fell dead upon the stones. Ten years after, that sister sat weeping again by that boy's side. He was in chains, sentenced to be hung for shooting a farmer, whilst poaching. They were waiting for the awful procession to knock at the cell door. "Sister," he said, "do you remember the nest of rabbits ten years ago, how you begged and prayed, and I ridiculed? I verily believe that from that day God forsook me, and left me to follow my own inclinations. If I had yielded to your tears then, you and I would not be weeping these bitter tears now."[d]—*Indulgence of children.*—We would offer a word of caution against the practice of excessive indulgence. This is a great evil, and one much to be dreaded and guarded against. It is much worse than severity and stern reserve, and parents are much more liable to fall into it than into the other. They are prone to cherish an undue tenderness towards those who are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. But still it is productive of much evil: it disposes parents to overlook the faults and follies of their children, and renders them unwilling to correct or reprove them. And multitudes of children, of every generation, who might have been the pride of their parents, have been immolated to this effeminate idol. This was the case with the ungodly family of good old Eli, the Jewish high priest. He was a good man, but a weak and irresolute father, and so foolishly fond of and indulgent to his children that he restrained them from no evil; and they became so vile in the sight of the Lord, that both parent and child were visited with signal judgment from on high. God deprived the father and his posterity for ever of the office of priesthood, and visited his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, with the punishment of death, and thus filled his household with disgrace and affliction. And look at the domestic circle of David, the man after God's own heart. He was an over-indulgent father, and what was the consequence? His family went to ruin. His eldest son, Ammon, was guilty of a crime which modesty forbids to name; Absalom rose in rebellion against him, and threatened to pull the throne from underneath

him and the crown from off his head, and the result was untimely death to one, and inconsolable grief to the other; and Adonijah, his darling son, plotted against the rightful heir to the throne, and usurped the kingdom even before his father's death. Such was the reward of a father's undue fondling. Indeed, we seldom read of man rising to honour and eminence who had been so spoiled in the days of his boyhood. It did much to retard the mental improvement of young Wilberforce, the distinguished advocate of the slave; and it had well-nigh marred the success of the celebrated author of *The Wealth of Nations*. And Solomon's voice cries loud against it. He says, "He that spareth the rod hateth the child. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell. The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight to thy soul."[c]

12. scorner, Pr. i. 22. One in whom the habit of scorning is confirmed. **will he go,** to seek fellowship with. "With wise men he doth not associate."[a]

The scorner (*v.* 12).—I. He requires reproof—1. For his self-ignorance; 2. For his presumption. II. He shuns reproof. 1. He will not read books that will deal seriously and honestly with his character; 2. He will not attend a ministry that will expose his character in the broad light of eternal law; 3. He will not join the society that will deal truthfully with its members. III. He hates reproof.[b]

The swearer reproved by a child.—Some little children were sitting one day on the steps of a door singing, as they often do, some of their favourite hymns. They were suddenly surprised by a half-drunken man, who came up to them, and, uttering an oath, said, "Does your master teach you nothing but singing those foolish hymns?" "Yes," said a sharp little fellow, about six years of age, "He tells us it is wicked to swear." The poor worthless man seemed ashamed of his conduct, and passed on without further remark.

13—15. (13) **merry heart,** ch. xvii. 22. **cheerful,** bright, pleasant. **spirit is broken,** *lit.* the breath is oppressed, made laborious: there is much sighing, and so the countenance is made gloomy and sad.[a] (14) **heart . . knowledge,** the gist of the verse is this: The wise grow ever wiser, the foolish become ever more foolish.[b] (15) **afflicted,** contrast *v.* 13, those of a merry heart. Reference is not so much to distressing circumstances as to a depressed and desponding habit of mind. **continual feast,** "life to the cheerful is as one perpetual banquet, whether he be poor or rich."

Human hearts (*vv.* 13—15).—I. Here is the merry and the mournful heart. 1. The merry heart is a radiance to the countenance and a feast to the soul: 2. The mournful heart breaks the spirit and curses the whole life. II. Here is the understanding and the foolish heart. 1. The one seeketh knowledge; 2. The other feedeth on foolishness.[c]

Cheerfulness, a life inspiration.—Be cheerful, no matter what reverses obstruct your pathway, or what plagues follow in your trail to annoy you. Ask yourself what is to be gained by looking

"Whatever expands the affections, or enlarges the sphere of our sympathies; whatever makes us feel our relation to the universe, 'and all that it inherits,' in time and in eternity, to the great and beneficent Cause of all, must unquestionably refine our nature, and elevate us in the scale of being."—*Channing.*

a Hitzig.
"A scorner is one that not only makes a jest of God and religion, but bids defiance to the methods employed for his conviction and reformation. We ought not only to bid the wise welcome when they come to us, but to go to them, as beggars to the rich man's door for an alms."—*Mat. Henry.*
1 Ki. xxii. 8; Am. v. 10.
b Dr. Thomas.
a "Emotions of joy and sorrow show themselves in outward look and act."—*Spk. Com.*
b "Avoid frivolous amusements, unprofitable reading, the profane wit, vain superstitions, curious speculations on subjects beyond the reach of the human mind; avoid seeking to be wise above what is written."—*Nicholls.*
Pr. ix. 9, x. 21.
v. 14. *C. F. Fenwick*, 95; *E. Beeston*, 41.
vv. 14—16. *J. Fawcett.*
c Dr. Thomas.

"Like new liquor, which works over in foam and froth when thick and troubled, the joy of the sinner runs over in empty laughter and effervescent spirits when the heart is brimful of the wrath of God."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

"As riches and favour forsake a man, we discover him to be a fool; but nobody could find it out in his prosperity."—*La Bruyère.*

[d] *A. Helps.*

[a] Ps. xxxvii. 16; 1 Ti. vi. 6.

"Riches and poverty are more in the heart than in the hand; he is wealthy that is contented, he is poor that wanteth more."—*Bp. Hall.*

[b] "Possibly refers to the confusion and disorder in human society attendant upon riches without the fear of God." *Rucetschi.*

[c] Heb. *arucah*, an appointed portion, or ration, as for a march; then any allowance or diet.

v. 16. *A. Burgess, Orig. Sin*, Pt. ii. 437.

"Great numbers who quarrel with their condition have wanted not the power, but the will, to obtain a better state. They have never contemplated the difference between good and evil sufficiently to quicken aversion or invigorate desire; they have

or feeling sad when troubles throng around you, or how your condition is to be alleviated by abandoning yourself to despondency. If you are a young man, nature designed you "to be of good cheer;" and should you find your road to fortune, fame, or respectability, or any other boon to which your young heart aspires, a little thorny, consider it all for the best, and that these impediments are only thrown in your way to induce greater efforts and more patient endurance on your part. Far better spend a whole life in diligent, aye, cheerful and unremitting toil, though you never attain the pinnacle of your ambitious desires, than to turn back at the first appearance of misfortune, and allow despair to unnerve your energies or sour your naturally sweet and cheerful disposition. If you are of the softer, fairer portion of humanity, be cheerful, though we know full well that most afflictions are sweet to you when compared with disappointment and neglect; yet let hope banish despair and ill-forebodings. Be cheerful; do not brood over fond hopes unrealised, until a chain, link after link, is fastened on each thought, and wound around the heart. Nature intended you to be the fountain-spring of cheerfulness and social life, and not the travelling monument of despair and melancholy.[d]

16, 17. (16) **little**, a small portion of earthly goods. All possessions are proportionate to needs. The needs increase almost faster than the riches, so that the poor man's "little" is practically to him more than the rich man's "much."[a] **and trouble**,[b] wh. is sure to grow with increase of wealth. (17) **dinner of herbs**,[c] the meal of the poor man, who cannot afford meat: *lit.* "a portion of green;" *i.e.* vegetables. **stalled ox**, one tied up for fattening. Fatted oxen are holiday fare. Lu. xv. 23, 30. **hatred**, wh. may break out into quarrellings.

The two banquets (*v.* 17).—I. Look at the pictures which are here suggestively outlined. 1. A cottage interior; 2. The home of luxury. II. The comment which the royal philosopher writes underneath this effort of his pencil. The dinner of herbs was better—1. In the anticipation; 2. In the participation; 3. In the retrospect; 4. In the view of heaven. Learn:—(1) It does not follow that the dinner of herbs is always partaken of with love, nor that hatred is always the accompaniment of the stalled ox; (2) Let us sympathise with the poor, and show them how to enjoy hard fare; (3) A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Note on v. 17.—This passage is rendered by the Septuagint, as if they understood of it the forced accommodation of travellers, which Arabs and conquered people were obliged to submit to. It was not unusual for travellers to eat at the expense of those who were not pleased with entertaining them; and to use a kind of force which produced hatred. Dr. Shaw notices this circumstance. Speaking of Barbary, he says: "In this country the Arabs and other inhabitants are obliged, either by long custom, by the particular tenure of their lands, or from fear and compulsion, to give the Spahees and their company the Moquanah, as they call it, which is such a sufficient quantity of provisions for ourselves, together with straw and barley for our mules and horses. Besides a bowl of milk and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which, upon our arrival, were presented to us to stay our appetites, the master of the tent where we lodged fetched us

from his flock, according to the number of our company, a kid or a goat, a lamb or a sheep, half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served up with cuscasoõe: the rest was made Kab-ab, *i.e.* cut into pieces and roasted, which we reserved for our breakfast or dinner the next day." In the next page he says, "When we were entertained in a courteous manner (for the Arabs will sometimes supply us with nothing till it is extorted by force), the author used to give the master of the tent a knife, a couple of flints, or a small quantity of English gunpowder," etc. To prevent such parties from living at free charges upon them, the Arabs take care to pitch in woods, valleys, or places the least conspicuous, and that in consequence they found it difficult often to discover them.[d]

Moral origin of contentment.—

My conscience is my crown;
Contented thoughts my rest;
My heart is happy in itself;
My bliss is in my breast.

Enough, I reckon wealth;
A mean, the surest lot;
That lies too high for base contempt,
Too low for envy's shot.

My wishes are but few,
All easy to fulfil:
I make the limits of my power
The bounds unto my will.

I have no hopes but one,
Which is of heavenly reign:
Effects attain'd, or not desired,
All lower hopes refrain.

I feel no care of coin;
Well-doing is my wealth:
My mind to me an empire is,
While grace affordeth health.

I wrestle not with rage
While fury's flame doth burn;
It is in vain to stop the stream
Until the tide doth turn.

But when the flame is out,
And ebbing wrath doth end,
I turn a late enraged foe
Into a quiet friend.

And taught with often proof,
A temper'd calm I find
To be most solace to itself,
Best cure for angry mind.

No change of fortune's calms
Can cast my comforts down
When Fortune smiles, I smile to think
How quickly she will frown.[e]

indulged a drowsy thoughtlessness or giddy levity; have committed the balance of choice to the management of caprice; and when they have long accustomed themselves to receive all that chance offered them, without examination, lament at last that they find themselves deceived."—*Rambler.*

[d] *Burder.*

"There is scarce any lot so low but there is something in it to satisfy the man whom it has befallen; Providence having so ordered things, that in every man's cup, how bitter soever, there are some cordial drops, some good circumstances, which, if wisely extracted, are sufficient for the purpose he wants them, that is, to make him contented, and if not happy, at least resigned."—*Sterne.*

"Lord, who would live turmoil'd in the court, and may enjoy such quiet walks as these? This small inheritance my father left me contenteth me, and's worth a monarchy. I seek not to wax great by others' waning, or gather wealth, I care not with what envy; sufficeth that I have maintains my state, and sends the poor well pleased from my gate."—*Shakespeare.*

[e] *Southwell.*

18, 19. (18) wrathful man, one easily roused to anger.[e] slow to anger, ch. xiv. 29. (19) hedge of thorns,[b] "it pricks, lacerates, and entangles the miserable wretch."[c] He is always encountering obstacles and hindrances. "Those that have no heart to their work pretend that their way is hedged up with thorns, so that they cannot do it."[d] made plain, *Heb.* "raised up as a causeway."

Oriental gardens (*v.* 19).—The Oriental gardens were either open plantations or enclosures defended by walls or hedges. Rauwolf found about Tripoli many gardens and vineyards enclosed for the most part with hedges, and separated by shady walks. Some fences in the Holy Land, in later times, are not less beautiful than our living fences of white thorn, and perfectly answer the description of ancient Jewish prophets, who inform us that the hedges of their time consisted of thorns, and that the spikes of these thorny plants were exceedingly sharp. Doubdan found a very fruitful vineyard, full of olives, fig trees, and vines, about eight miles south-west of Bethlehem, enclosed with a hedge, and that part of it adjoining to the road strongly formed of thorns and rose bushes, intermingled with pomegranate trees of surpassing beauty and fragrance. A hedge composed of rose bushes and wild pomegranate shrubs, then in full flower, mingled with other thorny plants, adorned in the varied livery of spring, must have made at once a strong and beautiful fence. The wild pomegranate tree, the species probably used in fencing, is much more prickly than the other variety; and when mingled with other thorny bushes, of which they have several kinds in Palestine, some whose prickles are very long and sharp, must form a hedge very difficult to penetrate. These facts illustrate the beauty and force of several passages in the sacred volume: thus, in the Proverbs of Solomon, "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns;" it is obstructed with difficulties, which the sloth and indolence of his temper represent as galling or insuperable, but which a moderate share of resolution and perseverance would easily remove or surmount.[c]

20, 21. (20) wise son, ch. x. 1. despiseth, putteth to shame. The mother especially is reproached as the most intimately associated with his training. Such reproach would be a mother's deepest grief. (21) folly, or unreasonable conduct, senseless action. joy, it gives a sort of pleasure.[a] destitute, *etc.*, better. "void of heart." walketh uprightly, and finds out the true joy that lies in so doing. "Lives a sober, orderly, regular life."

The widow and her two sons.—In Birmingham once lived a family in humble circumstances. Some of the younger children and their father died, leaving the aged mother with two sons grown up, and able to assist her. This, however, they refused to do, and she was obliged to apply to the parish for relief; and for some years two shillings a week were allowed her by the overseers, which, with a small sum added by some Christian friends, was all on which she had to subsist. During this time her youngest son died. He had lived without the fear of God, and died under a sense of His wrath, in deep agonies, both of body and mind. The eldest son was clever in his business, got forward in the world, and became possessed of considerable pro-

a Pr. xxvi. 21, xxix. 22.

b "The Prov. condenses a parable. The slothful goes on his journey, and for him the path is thick set with thorns, briars, fences, through wh. he cannot force his way. For the upright the same path is as the broad raised causeway of the king's highway. —*Spk. Com.*

"Sloth in the conclusion proves laborious." —*Lord Bacon.*

c Thomson.

d Mat. Henry.

e Paxton.

"As small letters hurt the sight, so do small matters him that is too much intent upon them: they vex and stir up anger, which begets an evil habit in him in reference to greater affairs." —*Plutarch.*

a Pr. x. 23; Eph. v. 15.

"This is manifested very early. One of the first objects which an infant notices is another child. There seems to be a spell in a young face which charms an infant. This principle is manifested in the universal love of dolls. When the infant arrives at childhood, he finds an excitement in the society of children which that of grown-up people does not

perty. But he still refused to assist his mother, and even while holding offices of consideration and importance, left her to subsist on her allowance from the parish. This conduct of course was noticed; he was repeatedly spoken to upon the subject; and at length he ordered her name to be taken from the parish books, and allowed her the two shillings a week out of his own pocket, at a time when he possessed thousands of pounds, and was without a family. In a short time afterwards the mother was removed to another world. The circumstances of the son at length began to change; repeated losses ensued, and finally he became a bankrupt, and was reduced to abject poverty.—*Characteristics of a child.*—

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock chastisement and partnership in play;
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient: solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth startled from the fern where she lay couched,
Unthought of, unexpected as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow flowers;
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images impressed
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.[b]

22, 23. (22) **purposes,** designs, or plans. All such should be submitted to the judgment of the wise before being undertaken. Only the rash, or the conceited, enter upon important plans without due consideration and deliberation. **counsellors,**[a] provided they be honest and wise. (23) **answer . . mouth,** reference may be to those ready and witty answers wh. Eastern people value more than argument. "Good advice blesses the giver and the receiver."[b] **word in season,** *i.e.* the ready, clever answer of the first clause.

A word in season (*v.* 23).—I. There are certain seasons in the lives of most men when a word aptly spoken may be of incalculable advantage. 1. The time of dawning manhood; 2. Of impending danger; 3. Of thoughtless sin. II. But in such seasons there will be no word spoken unless there is the speaking gift.

A word in season.—Mr. Howe being at dinner with some persons of fashion, a gentleman expatiated largely in praise of King Charles I., introducing some harsh reflections upon others. Mr. Howe observing that the gentleman mixed many oaths with his discourse, told him that, in his humble opinion, he had omitted a singular excellence in the character of that prince. The gentleman eagerly desired him to mention it, and seemed all impatience to know what it was. "It was this, sir," said Mr.

afford. His faculties are stimulated by this principle, so that powers are developed which would otherwise remain dormant. You place a child that has no natural talent for music among children who possess this gift, and under their tutelage he will soon learn to sing. This fact has been fully substantiated in very many instances."—*S. G. Goodrich.*

"I remember a great man coming into my house at Waltham; and seeing all my children standing in the order of their age and stature, he said, 'These are they that make rich men poor.' But he straight received this answer, 'Nay, my lord, these are they that make a poor man rich; for there is not one of these whom we would part with for all your wealth.'"—*Bp. Hall.*

b Wordsworth.

a "The Heb. word used is almost an official title, and brings before us the picture of the divan or council chamber of Eastern countries, arranged for a solemn conference of the wise."—*Spk. Com.*

b Fausset.

v. 22. *T. Boston,* iv. 67; *Dr. J. Disney,* i. 379; *D. Patterson,* 215; *T. Ainger,* 348; *A. B. Evans,* 115.

"The Spaniards in Chili believed

that no water was so wholesome or of so delicate a flavour as that which flowed through veins of gold; certainly no conversation is so edifying to the hearers as that which pours forth from a heart stored with sacred knowledge, sanctified experience, devout contemplations, and such like precious treasures." — *Spurgeon.*

c R. T. S.

"It is said of Eliot the missionary, by one of his friends, 'I was never with him, but I got or might have got some good from his company.' Archbishop Usher and Dr. Preston were very intimate, and often met to converse on learned and general subjects; when the archbishop used commonly to say, 'Come, Doctor, let us have one word about Christ before we part.'"—*Bowes.*

a Ph. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1, 2.

a Phi. iii. 20.

b "Suggests a hopeless abode in the dark kingdom of the dead, as the final destination of the sinner's course of life."—*O. Zöckler.*

c Sometimes used for a space within borders.

d "Here the innocent widow who is in danger of being wronged by the proud through encroachment upon her borders." — *Lange.*

e C. Jenkins.

f J. Preston

Howe; "he was never heard to swear an oath in common conversation." The hint was as politely received as given; and the gentleman promised to break off the practice. At another time, passing two persons of quality, who were talking with great eagerness, and imprecating curses on each other repeatedly, Mr. Howe said to them, taking off his hat in a respectful manner, "I pray God save you both!" for which handsome reproof they immediately returned him thanks.[e]—*Effect of conversation.*—While Hopu, a young Sandwich-Islander, was in America, he spent an evening in a company where an infidel lawyer tried to puzzle him with difficult questions. At length the native said, "I am a poor heathen boy. It is not strange that my blunders in English should amuse you. But soon there will be a larger meeting than this. We shall all be there. They will ask us all one question, namely, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?'. Now, sir, I think *I* can say 'Yes.' What will *you* say, sir?" When he had stopped, all present were silent. At length the lawyer said that, as the evening was far gone, they had better conclude it with prayer: and proposed that the native youth should pray. He did so; and as he poured out his heart to God the lawyer could not conceal his feelings. Tears started from his eyes, and he sobbed aloud. All present wept too; and when they separated, the words, "What will *you* say, sir?" followed the lawyer home, and did not leave him till he was brought to the Saviour.

24, 25. (24) **way of life**, the whole course and tenor of life. **above**, contrasted with "beneath." It is high-toned, and tends heavenwards.[a] Leads ever upward, to higher degrees of moral purity, elevation, and power. **hell beneath**,[b] the path of the wicked leading ever lower, down to the gloom of Sheol. (25) **house**, contrasted in its grandeur with the "border,"[c] or little estate, which is all the lot of the widow.[d] In Scrip. the widow is often made the type of desolateness. Yet such are safer in God's protection than the self-confident rich and proud.

True piety (*v.* 24).—I. It is elevated in principle. 1. The religion of the wise is elevated in principle above the received maxims of worldly prudence; 2. And above the accredited standard of worldly morality: 3. And above the authority of prevailing opinions. II. The wise who are in the way of life are elevated in taste. 1. Above the mere decorations of their persons and dwellings; 2. Above the desire of human applause; 3. They are superior to the admiration of merely talented men; 4. Above the feeling of enthusiastic delight in the works of mere art, of taste, or of fancy. III. They are elevated in pursuit. 1. Above what might be deemed their worldly interest; 2. Above the present benefits of religion.[e]

Careful walking.—It is our wisdom to do that which God hath appointed a man to do; to do that which the rule of wisdom hath appointed, that must needs be the wisest way. Now, it is the rule of wisdom that commands us to walk exactly; and as he is the best writer that comes nearest to his copy, and he is the best carpenter that comes nearest his rule appointed him, so he is the wisest man that comes nearest the rule of wisdom, which is the Book of God, which exhorts us to walk exactly.[f]

26, 27. (26) **thoughts**, *etc.*, as ch. vi. 18. **pleasant**

words, or words of pleasantness: pleasing to God. Better read the second clause, "Words of pleasantness are pure" (and so acceptable to God). (27) greedy of gain,[a] as a corrupt judge, who thinks more of bribes than of just judgments. It may be taken generally for "avarice." gifts, used as bribes.[b]

The penalty of avarice (*v.* 27).—A peasant once entered the hall of justice at Florence, at the time that Alexander, Duke of Tuscany, was presiding. He stated that he had the good fortune to find a purse of sixty ducats, and learning that it belonged to Friuli, the merchant, who offered a reward of ten ducats to the finder, he restored it to him, but that he had refused the promised reward. The duke instantly ordered Friuli to be summoned into his presence, and questioned why he refused the reward? The merchant replied that he conceived the peasant had paid himself; for although, when he gave notice of his loss, he said this purse only contained sixty ducats, it in fact had seventy in it. The duke inquired if this mistake was discovered before the purse was found. Friuli answered in the negative. "Then," said the duke, "as I have a very high opinion of the honesty of this peasant, I am induced to believe that there is indeed a mistake in this transaction; for as the purse you lost had in it seventy ducats, and this which he found contains sixty only, it is impossible that it can be the same." He then gave the purse to the peasant, and promised to protect him against all future claimants.[c]

28, 29. (28) studieth, thinks before speaking. poureth out, speaking before thinking. "Caution is the fruit of wisdom, rashness of folly."[a] Comp. our Lord's teaching, Mat. x. 19. The harmony of those two forms of counsel may easily be recognised. evil things, injurious things. (29) far from,[b] *see* John ix. 31. prayer, *etc.*,[c] Ps. xxxiv. 18.

Men of thought.—The great men of earth are the shadowy men, who, having lived and died, now live again and for ever through their undying thoughts. Thus living, though their footfalls are heard no more, their voices are louder than the thunder, and unceasing as the flow of tides or air. Moses was not half living when he was alive. His real life has been since he died. The Prophets seemed almost useless in their time. They did little for themselves or for the Church of their day; but when you look at the life they have lived since you will find that they have been God's pilots guiding the Church through all perils. From their black bosoms they sent forth the blast of His lightning and the roar of His thunder: and to-day, if the Church needs rebuke and denunciation, it is they who must hurl it. I could have killed old Jeremiah, if I could have got at his ribs; but I should like to see the archer that could hit him now. Martin Luther was mighty when he lived; but the shadowy Luther is mightier than a regiment of fleshly Luthers. When he was on earth, he in some sense asked the pope leave to be, and the emperor and the elector leave to be; he asked the stream and the wheat to give him sustenance for a day: but now that his body is dead, now that that rubbish is out of the way, he asks no leave of pope, or elector, or emperor, but is the monarch of thought, and the noblest defender of the faith to the end of time.[d]—*Conversation with good men.*—Next to conversation with God by prayer, the conversation of good men does wonderfully

a Je. xvii. 11; Ha. ii. 9; 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10.

b Ex. xxiii. 8; De. xvi. 19.

c Percy Anec. "The progress of a private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very distinct perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended; and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

a Fausset.

b I Pe. iii. 12. God never leaves any till they leave Him first.

c "He that is much in prayer shall grow rich in grace, and have most of heaven upon earth."—*Archbp. Leighton.*

d H. W. Beecher. "If I were to choose the people with whom I would spend my hours of conversation, they should be certainly such as laboured no further than to make themselves readily and clearly apprehended, and would have patience and curiosity to understand me. To have good

sense and ability to express it are the most essential and necessary qualities in companions. When thoughts rise in us fit to utter among familiar friends there needs but very little care in clothing them."—*Steele.*

contribute to the building us up in faith and virtue. How does the sense and experience of such as deserve our esteem and affection settle and establish our judgment when they concur with us! How does their knowledge enlighten us, their reason strengthen our faith, and their example inflame us with emulation! A pious friendship renders religion itself more engaging; it sanctifies our very diversions and recreations, and makes them minister to virtue; it minds us when we are forgetful, supports and encourages us when we faint and tire, reproves and corrects us when we give back, and recalls us in the right path when we go out of it. This is, or it should be, the business of conversation, the end and advantage of friendship; we should be often talking together of the things of God, communicating and laying open the state of our souls, our fears, our hopes, our improvements, and defects: we should watch over one another, comfort and support one another; our discourse should always minister new warmth or new strength to our holy faith and love.

30, 31. (30) **light of the eyes**, the brightness of eyes characteristic of good health. Or it may be a friendly look from another rejoiceth our heart. **good report**, the good news a friend may bring to us. (31) **abideth among**, dwells with, in the midst of, the wise.

Self-conquest.—Peter the Great made a law in 1722 that if any nobleman beat or ill-treated his slaves he should be looked upon as insane, and a guardian should be appointed to take care of his person and of his estate. This great monarch once struck his gardener, who, being a man of great sensibility, took to his bed, and died in a few days. Peter, hearing of this, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Alas! I have civilised my own subjects; I have conquered other nations; yet I have not been able to civilise or to conquer myself."[a]

32, 33. (32) **instruction**, or correction.[e] **despiseth**, *etc.*, acts as if he had no regard for his own best interests. **heareth**, so as to obey. **understanding**, lit. *heart;* moral rather than intellectual wisdom. (33) **fear**, *etc.*,[b] Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxi. 10. **before . . humility**, in the face of; in front of.[c]

Despising the soul (*v.* 32).—I. Who are they that despise their own souls? 1. Those who deny the spirituality and immortality of the soul: 2. Those who by their practice despise the soul. II. Show the folly of such a course. Consider—1. The nature of the soul; 2. Its nearness; 3. Its purchase: 4. The projects laid for souls; 5. The perpetual duration of souls. III. Application. Let us—1. See and bewail the folly of having such low thoughts of the soul; 2. Make it appear that we do value our souls; 3. Value other things as they have relation to our souls; 4. If we must not despise our own souls, neither should we the souls of others.[d]

Wellington and the officer.—In the early part of the Duke of Wellington's career, when as Sir Arthur Wellesley, in India, an officer dining at the mess where he presided was sporting his infidel sentiments. Sir Arthur, wishing to put down such conversation, said, "S——, did you ever read Paley's *Evidences?*" The reply was in the negative. "Well, then," said Sir Arthur, "you had better read that book before you talk in the way you are doing." The occurrence passed away, and the conversation

[e] Men with grey eyes are generally keen, energetic, and at first cold; but you may depend upon their sympathy with real sorrow. Search the ranks of our benevolent men, and you will agree with me."—*Dr. Leask.*

[a] *Cheever.*

[a] "Nothing but grace can teach us to make a right use of others' judgments."—*Bp. Hall.*

[b] "The fear of God and humility go together; where the one is the other is, and as the one is the way to wisdom, the other is the way to glory."—*Gill.*

[c] "The more humble the fitter to come to God, and He the more willing to come in . the soul and dwell in it. The highest heavens are the habitation of God's glory, and the humble heart hath the next

was soon forgotten; but the reference to Paley's work led Colonel S—— to inquire after it, and, having obtained a copy, he read it with the most serious attention. He rose from the perusal of it with the fullest conviction of the falsehood of the system he had formerly adopted, and of the Divine origin of Christianity. But he did not stop here; he was determined to examine the Book itself, which he was thus satisfied was a revelation from God. The result was that he cordially received this revelation of mercy, saw and felt his need of a Saviour, and, believing in Jesus, became a Christian not in name only, but in deed and in truth. Colonel S——, feeling his obligation to Sir Arthur, afterwards wrote to him, thanking him for his kindness in recommending to him Dr. Paley's valuable work, and earnestly advising him not to be satisfied with merely knowing the external evidence of Christianity, but to inquire what this Divine communication really contains.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—3 (1) **preparations**, disposings, or plans: the thinkings and schemings.[a] "Man proposes, God disposes." (2) **clean . . eyes**, the last thing a man is willing to see is his own failing and fault.[b] **weighs**, tests, tries, judges the value of. God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." **spirits**, *i.e* the inward dispositions and motives. (3) **commit**, *etc.*, lit. *roll.*[c] **thoughts**, plans which thou wouldest work out.[d]

Spirit-weighing (*v* 2).—I. Man deceived. Why? 1. Because they adopt the moral standard of the circle in which they move; 2. Because they judge themselves by those who are worse than they are; 3. Because they take false views of moral evil; 4. Because there is an absence of careful examination about them. II. Deity investigating. Here is suggested to us—1. The wonderfulness of God's power; 2. Of God's pitifulness.[e]

Weighing our plans.—Before proceeding to any work we should weigh it Letters are charged in the Post Office according to weight I have written and sealed a letter containing several sheets: I desire that it should pass, I think that it will, but I know well that it will not be allowed to pass because I desire that it should or think that it will. I know well that it will be tested by imperial weights and measures. Before I plunge it beyond my reach, I place it on a balance before me, not constructed to please my desire but honestly adjusted to the legal standard. I weigh it there, and check it myself by the very rules which Government will apply. So should we weigh our purposes in the balance, before we launch them forth in action.[f]—*Faults of conversation.*—Every one endeavours to make himself as agreeable to society as he can; but it often happens that those who most aim at shining in conversation overshoot their mark. We should try to keep up conversation like a ball bandied too and fro from one to the other, rather than seize it all to ourselves, and drive it before us like a football. We should likewise be cautious to adapt the matter of our discourse to our company; and not talk Greek before ladies, or of the last new fashion to a meeting of country justices. But nothing throws a more ridiculous air over our whole conversation than

honour to be the habitation of His grace."—*Archbp. Leighton.*

"Humility preserves the true and noble freedom of the mind of man, secures his dear liberty and peaceful dominion of himself. This is the effect of excellent wisdom."—*W. Bates.*

d M. Henry.

a "Thoughts come and go, as it were, spontaneously, but true, well-ordered speech is the gift of God."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Conscience then, simply as conscience, is no safe guide; it requires to be informed and regulated by God's will and Word. A right intention is not enough to make a good action."—*Wordsworth*

c Ps. xxii. 8, xxxvii. 5, lv. 22.

d "Rely on God for success to your lawful purposes."—*Fausset.* "Prayer is the rest of our care and the calm of our tempest."—*J. Taylor.*

e H. J. Martyn.

f W. Arnot.

"There is so much correspondence betwixt the heart and tongue that they will move at once. Every man, therefore, speaks of his own pleasure and care. If the heart were full of God, the

tongue could not refrain to talk of Him: the rareness of Christian communication argues the common poverty of grace. If Christ be not in our hearts, we are godless; if He be there without our joy, we are senseless; if we rejoice in Him, and speak not of Him, we are shamefully unthankful. . . . I will think of Thee always, O Lord; so it shall be my joy to speak of Thee often; and if I find not opportunity, I will make it." — *Bp. Hall.*

peculiarities, easily acquired, but not conquered or discarded without extreme difficulty. Those who accompany every word with a peculiar grimace or gesture; who assent with a shrug, contradict with a twisting of the neck, are angry with a wry mouth, and pleased in a caper or minuet step, may be considered as speaking harlequins. With these we condemn the affected tribe of mimics, who are constantly taking off the peculiar tone of voice or gesture of their acquaintance; though they are generally such wretched imitators that, like bad painters, they are frequently forced to write the name under the picture, before we can discover any likeness. It is unnecessary to point out all the pests of conversation, or to dwell particularly on the sensibles, who pronounce dogmatically on the most trivial points, and speak in sentences; the wonderers, who are always wondering what o'clock it is, or wondering whether it will rain or no, or wondering when the moon changes; the phraseologists, who explain a thing by all that and t'other: and lastly, the silent persons, who seem afraid of opening their mouths lest they should catch cold, and literally observe the precepts of the Gospel, letting their conversation be only Yea, yea, and Nay, nay. The rational intercourse kept up by conversation is one of our principal distinctions from brutes. We should therefore endeavour to turn this particular talent to our advantage, and consider the organs of speech as the instruments of understanding; we should be very careful not to use them as the weapons of vice or tools of folly, and do our utmost to unlearn any trivial or ridiculous habits, which tend to lessen the value of such an inestimable prerogative.[g]

g Steele.

4—6. (4) **for himself,** better. *for itself:* i.e. for its own end; fitting it to the precise object for which He designed it. **wicked . . evil,** better turned round. God hath even appointed the evil day for the wicked. Any day of calamity is meant, either in this life or in another. God's connection between sin and suffering is designed in infinite wisdom and grace.[a] (5) **proud,** *etc.*, ch. vi. 17. **hand,** *etc.*, ch. xi. 21. (6) **mercy and truth,**[b] wh. are states of mind and heart set in contrast with ritual sacrifices and ceremonies. **purged,** cleared out of our heart.

a Job xxi. 30; Is. xliii. 21. "It is one of the greatest praises of God's wisdom that He can turn the evil of men to His own glory."—*Bp. Hall.*

b Ps. l. 13, 14, li. 16, 17; Mic. vi. 6–8. "Mercy and truth are a sign and necessary expression of a really penitent and believing disposition of heart."—*O. Zöckler.*

The secret of deliverance from evil (*v.* 6).—There is evil in the world: the evil of sin. How am I to get quit of this evil? This is the great question. 1. Not by time—time cures many things, but not this; 2. Not by effort; 3. Not by human wisdom; 4. Not by law; 5. Not by terror; but by the fear of the Lord, which unfolds itself in—(1) Obedience; (2) Fellowship; (3) Love; (4) Zeal. If we fear God we must—1. Try to please Him; 2. Give up sin; 3. Do His will; 4. Seek to be like Him.[c]

c Dr. Bonar.

Human reverses.—Bajazet having observed, after his enemy made him prisoner, that the latter laughed at him, said, "Do not laugh, Tamerlane, at my misfortune, for God, not you, has subdued me; and He is able to-morrow to undo what He has done to-day, and reverse our situations." Tamerlane immediately assumed a serious countenance, and answered, "I laughed not with a design to exult over you, but from a sudden impression that thrones and kingdoms must be held in low estimation in heaven, since one crown has been bestowed on such a blink-eyed man as you, and another on such a crippled man as myself."

d Whitecross. "Were my whole life to come one heap of troubles, the pleasure of this moment would suffice, and sweeten all my griefs with its remembrance."—*Lee.*

Thrones and rickety chairs are of equal reckoning in the arithmetic of heaven. Nothing, so far as regards man, is of value there, except "the pearl which is beyond price"—"the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, imputed to us by God, and received by faith alone."[d]

7, 8. (7) at peace with him, that goodness wh. is acceptable to God tends also to pacify and to win men.[a] (8) better, *etc.*, Ps. xxxvii. 16: Pr. xv. 16.[b]

Pleasing God (*v.* 7).—Consider this subject—I. As a glorious possibility of being. The ways are not merely external service, but a loving obedience to His will. If we please Him we shall —1. Please ourselves; 2. The spiritual universe. II. As winning the good will of enemies. 1. A good man may have enemies; 2. The overcoming of their enmity is a desirable thing; 3. Pleasing the Lord is the surest way to overcome it.[c]

The stolen fruit.—A Christian merchant retired from the engagements of commerce to a pleasant residence on the banks of the Mersey; and while his gardens and hothouses abounded with choice and valuable fruit, they were entered by some depredators, who carried away much of their produce. The next morning the proprietor caused a placard to be issued, intimating that the gardens had been plundered of a considerable quantity of fruit, and that as it was possible that want might have incited to the act, he took this method of giving notice that, if such were the case, and the person offending would make known his circumstances, he should not only be freely forgiven, but his necessities should be relieved. The result was soon apparent. Such was the effect of the statement, that though the premises were peculiarly exposed, no other instance of depredation occurred. Even the rude and uncultivated villagers felt the commanding influence of kindness so great, and unhappily so rare, and could only regard the interesting person who had fixed his residence among them with a feeling of veneration such as they had never cherished before for any human being.

9, 10. (9) deviseth, arranges it with anxious thought. Comp. *v.* 1. The form of the verb suggests the idea of laborious consideration. directeth, determines precisely how they shall go. (10) divine sentence, or divination. As representative of God, the king's decisions had a special validity and dignity. transgresseth not, doth not speak wickedly.[a]

Model monarchs (*vv.* 10—15).—Four particulars of such a king. I. He speaks the right. 1. Truth in expression; 2. In meaning. II. He judges the right. 1. God demands social rectitude: 2. A true king is a minister of social rectitude. III. He feels the right. 1. The loathing of wickedness in a king is the pursuit of righteousness; 2. That this pursuit in a king is the stability of his throne. IV. He vindicates the right. 1. By approving the right in his subjects; 2. By avenging the wrong on his subjects; 3. By encouraging the true in his subjects.[b]

Providence.—The great drama of a nation's politics, and the most mighty changes in the history and character of mankind, may hinge on circumstances of the most trivial nature. One of the most remarkable instances of this sort is found in the history of Mohammed. When his pursuers followed hard upon him to take his life, they were turned away from the mouth of the cave

a Pr. xxv. 21, 22.

b "The fewer desires the more peace. The only sure way to peace is to give the heart entirely to God."—*Bp. Wilson.*

c Dr. Thomas.

"The rabbins note a principle of nature,—that putrefaction is more dangerous before maturity than after; and another noteth a position in moral philosophy,—that men abandoned to vice do not so much corrupt manners as those that are half good and half evil."—*Lord Bacon.*

a "The passage lays down the principle that the *King can do no wrong*, in a narrower assertion of it, and with this difference, that it is here no political fiction, but a believing conviction."—*Hitzig.*

1 Ki. iii. 9; Ps. lxxii. 1.

b Dr. Thomas.

"Ah, that Deceit should steal such gentle shapes, and with a virtuous visor hide deep vice!"—*Shakespeare*

in which he had the moment before taken shelter by the flight of a bird from one of the shrubs that grew at its entry. For they inferred that if he had recently passed that way, the bird must previously have been frightened away, and would not now have made its appearance. It is a striking remark of the historian, that this bird, by its flight on this occasion, changed the destiny of the world—instrumental as it was in perpetuating the life of the false Prophet, and with him the reign of that superstition which to this day hath a wider ascendency over our species than Christianity itself. Such are the links and concatenations of all history. It is well that God has the management, and that what to man is chaos, in the hands of God is a sure and unerring mechanism.[c]

11—13. (11) **just weight**, *see* ch. xi. 1. **weights . . bag**, lit. *stones*.[a] (12) **abomination**, in God's sight and men's. The high position and influence of kings makes their character of supreme importance. Or, the idea may be, kings think it an abomination for their people to do wickedly, bec. it imperils the stability of their throne. (13) **righteous lips**, speaking truth and goodness. **right**, *i.e.* upright things.[b]

Weights and measures.—The Jews were required to be exact in their weights and measures, that the poor might not be defrauded. Hesychius remarks upon this point, as a reason for such great care, that what the possession of a field or house is to a wealthy man, that the measure of corn, or wine, or the weight of bread, is to the poor, who have daily need of such things for the support of life. "The Jewish doctors assert that it was a constitution of their wise men, for the preventing of all frauds in these matters, that no weights, balances, or measures should be made of any metal, as of iron, lead, tin (which were liable to rust, or might be bent, or easily impaired), but of marble, stone, or glass, which were less subject to be abused: and therefore the Scripture, speaking of the justice of God's judgments, observes (according to the Vulgate) that 'they are weighed with all the stones in the bag.'"[c]

14, 15. (14) **wrath . . death**, the means for executing his wrath are close to his hand. Specially true of irresponsible and capricious Eastern sovereigns. Comp. the wrath of Ahasuerus against Haman.[a] Est. vii. 5—10. **pacify it**, as ch. xv. 1. (15) **light**, or smile, sign of favour and acceptance.[b] **is life**, not only assures the conservation of life, but also the joy and pleasure of life. The king's smile makes glad those it shines upon. **cloud**, *etc.*, wh. is most welcome to the parched and thirsty earth. **latter rain**, wh. fell just before harvest, to mature the crop:[c] its month was March or April.

A king's wrath (*v.* 14).—Executions in the East are often very prompt and arbitrary. In many cases the suspicion is no sooner entertained, or the cause of offence given, than the fatal order is issued; the messenger of death hurries to the unsuspecting victim, shows his warrant, and executes his orders that instant in silence and solitude. Instances of this kind are continually occurring in the Turkish and Persian histories. "When the enemies of a great man among the Turks have gained influence enough over the prince to procure a warrant for his death, a capidgi (the name of the officer who executes these orders) is sent to him, who shows him the order he has received to carry back

"Who dares think one thing, and another tell, my heart detests him as the gates of hell"—*Pope.*

c Cheever.

a "The principle that social justice is an essential part of religion is exemplified in our own country, where the standard weights are enshrined in a sacred building attached to the Church where the sovereigns of England are crowned."—*Wordsworth.*

b Is. xi. 2—4.

"An honest death is better than a dishonest life."—*Socrates.*

c Lewis.

a "An angry word from an incensed prince has been to many a messenger of death, and has struck so great a terror upon some as if a sentence of death had been pronounced upon them."—*Mat. Henry.*

"These words remind us almost painfully of the terrible rapidity with wh., in the despotic monarchies of the East, punishment, even death, follows on displeasure."—*Spk. Com.*

Pr. xix. 12, xx. 2.

his head; the other takes the warrant of the grand seignior, kisses it, puts it on his head in token of respect, and then having performed his ablutions, and said his prayers, freely resigns his life. The capidgi having strangled him, cuts off his head, and brings it to Constantinople. The grand seignior's order is implicitly obeyed; the servants of the victim never attempt to hinder the executioner, although these capidgis come very often with few or no attendants." It appears from the writings of Chardin that the nobility and grandees of Persia are put to death in a manner equally silent, hasty, and unobstructed. Such executions were not uncommon among the Jews under the government of their kings. Solomon sent Benaiah as his capidgi, or executioner, to put Adonijah, a prince of his own family, to death: and Joab, the commander-in-chief of the forces in the reign of his father. A capidgi likewise beheaded John the Baptist in the prison, and carried his head to the court of Herod. To such silent and hasty executioners the royal preacher seems to refer in that Proverb, "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it;" his displeasure exposes the unhappy offender to immediate death, and may fill the unsuspecting bosom with terror and dismay, like the appearance of a capidgi; but by wise and prudent conduct, a man may sometimes escape the danger.[d]

16, 17. (16) better, *etc.*, see ch. viii. 11.[a] *Wordsworth* notices the distinction in the values attached to wisdom (Heb. *chocmah*) and to intelligence (Heb. *binah*), lit. discernment, the faculty of distinguishing between one thing and another. (17) highway, raised, well-graded road: representing the habitual course of the righteous. depart, or decline.[b] keepeth, by godly watching and care.[c]

Keeping in the way.—Every traveller has something very precious in his custody—his own soul. You will lose it, pilgrim, if you go off the way. The miners in the gold-fields of Australia, when they have gathered a large quantity of the dust, make for the city with the treasure. The mine is far in the interior, the country is wild, the bush is infested by robbers; the miners keep the road and the daylight. They march in company, and close by the guard sent to protect them. They do not stray from the path among the woods, for they carry with them a treasure which they value, and they are determined to run no risks.[d]

18, 19. (18) pride, *etc.*, see ch. xi. 2, xviii. 12. destruction, as seen in Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. haughty spirit, the lifting up of the spirit. fall, a tottering, a downfall; either in penitence or in ruin.[a] (19) divide the spoil, as they do who conquer in battle.[b]

Effects of pride.—In 1201, Simon Tournay, after he had excelled all his contemporaries at Oxford in learning, and become so eminent in Paris as to be made the chief doctor of the Sorbonne, grew so proud that, while he regarded Aristotle as superior to Moses and Christ, he considered him as but equal to himself. He became such an idiot at length, as not to know one letter in a book, or one thing he had ever done.

"The tower which rears its head so high,
And bids defiance to the sky,
Invites the hostile winds;

b Comp. Nu. vi. 25; Ps. xxxi. 16; also Ps. iv. 6.

c De. xi. 14; Je. iii. 3, v. 24; Ja. v. 7.

"What sudden anger's this? how have I reap'd it? He parted frowning from me, as if ruin leap'd from his eyes: so looks the chafed lion upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him; then makes him nothing."—*Shakespeare.*

d *Paxton.*

a Pr. iii. 13—16, iv. 5.

b "A noble paradox; the *highway* of the upright is a *byway* from evil; the *byway* of the wicked is a highway to evil. Mat. vii. 13."—*Wordsworth.*

c Ps. cxix. 9.

vv. 17—19. *Dr. J. Donne*, i. 214.

d *W. Arnot.*

a Comp. *Bunyan's Pilgrim Song*—"He that is down need fear no fall, he that is low no pride."
"Haughtiness and pride imply self-confidence, which produces carelessness, and hence the fall or sliding."—*Fausset.*

b "Humility is much better than that high-spiritedness which,

though it carry away the honour and wealth of the world, makes God a man's enemy and the devil his master."—*Mat. Henry.*

a "Discretion in speech is more than eloquence."—*Lord Bacon.*

b "This is the way to walk contentedly and cheerfully homewards, leaning and resting all the way on Him who is our guide and our strength."—*Archbp. Leighton.*

c Spk. Com.

Lu. iv. 22; Jno. vii. 46.

d C. H. Spurgeon.

"'Tis the property of all true knowledge, especially spiritual, to enlarge the soul by filling it; to enlarge it without swelling it; to make it more capable, and more earnest to know, the more it knows."—*Sprat.*

e R. T. S.

a "The thought is here in the first instance unquestionably of the blessing wh. comes directly to the possessor fr. his wisdom, and not of its life-dispensing, life-promoting influence on others."—*O. Zöckler.*

Jno. iv. 14, vii. 38.

v. 22. *T. Boston*, iv. 67; *Dr. J. Disney*, i. 379; *D. Patterson*, 215; *T. Aimger*, 348; *A. B. Evans*, 115.

The branching tree, extending wide,
Provokes destruction by its pride,
And courts the fall it finds."

20, 21. (20) **handleth**,[a] *etc.* Vulg. etc. rend. "He that attendeth to the Word of God," ch. xiii. 13. **find good**, ch. xvii. 20, xix. 8. **trusteth**, *etc.*, led by the Word to a real and practical reliance on God.[b] (21) **wise in heart**, who have moral wisdom. **prudent**, bec. they will be sure to consider carefully their conduct. **sweetness . . learning**, *lit.* "grace of lips." "He who has the gift of uttering moral wisdom in winning speech increases it in himself and in others."[c]

How to take hold of life (*v.* 20).—I. Wisdom is man's true strength; and, under its guidance, he best accomplishes the ends of his being. II. Wisely handling the matter of life gives to man the richest enjoyment, and presents the noblest occupation for his powers; hence by it he finds good in the fullest sense. III. The true way to handle a matter wisely is to trust in the Lord. IV. He who trusts in the Lord has a diploma for wisdom granted by inspiration: happy is he now, and happier shall he be above.[d]

Rev. S. Lowell.—The late Rev. Samuel Lowell, of Bristol, being once at Brighton, expressed a wish to walk on the Steyne, and to have the public characters pointed out to him. Amongst the rest, a celebrated comedian was noticed. "Ah," said Mr. Lowell, "is that ——, my old schoolfellow? I'll speak to him." He accosted him, and the following conversation took place:—*Lowell:* "Sir, I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. ——." *Player:* "Yes, sir, my name is ——; but I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you." *L.:* "What! not know your old schoolfellow, Samuel Lowell?" *P.:* "What! are you Samuel Lowell!" *L.:* "Yes, I am." *P.:* "Well. I am very glad to see you; now tell me your history in five minutes." *L.:* "First, my name is Samuel Lowell; I am a Dissenting minister at Bristol, where I have lived upwards of twenty years; I have a large family." *P.:* "So you are a Dissenting minister; well, you are a happy man, for you go to your work with pleasure, and perform it with pleasure: you are a happy man. I go to my work like a fool, to please fools: I am not a happy man."[e]

22. **understanding**, *i.e.* discretion. **wellspring**, ch. xiv. 27,[a] a fountain always flowing, and never dry. He has something to say on all occasions which is instructive, and with his own thoughts he can always edify himself. **instruction . . folly**, nothing good is to be obtained from the fool. Even his set and solemn discourses are but folly.

Vigour of the understanding.—Nobody knows what strength of parts he has till he has tried them. And of the understanding one may most truly say that its force is greater generally than it thinks, till it is put to it. And therefore the proper remedy here is but to set the mind to work, and apply the thoughts vigorously to the business: for it holds in the struggles of the mind as in those of war, *dum putant se vincere, vicere.* A persuasion that we shall overcome any difficulties that we meet with in the sciences, seldom fails to carry us through them. Nobody knows the strength of his mind, and the force of steady and

regular application, till he has tried. This is certain; he that sets out upon weak legs will not only go farther, but grow stronger, too, than one who, with a vigorous constitution and firm limbs, only sits still.[b]

b Locke.

23, 24. (23) **teacheth**, or maketh wise; prompteth wise words. Wisdom in the heart is the main matter. **learning**, sound reasoning, and forcible argument, wh. may convince the judgment. (24) **honeycomb**, *comp.* Ps. xix. 10. **sweet**, and so giving pleasure; and healing, so as to renew health. "This implies that honey took its place not only among the luxuries, but also among the medicines of the Israelites." **bones**, regarded as the strength of the man: "our innermost and most essential being."[a]

a Miller.

The teacher and his pupil (*v.* 23).—The heart a teacher—I. Of the lips. 1. Is powerful; 2. The only teacher of acceptable words; 3. Yet a frail teacher; 4. In many a timid teacher. II. The pupil of the heart, the mouth. 1. Often refractory; 2. Of small capacity; 3. Let it be a consecrated teacher, to speak the word of sympathy, of prayer, of thanksgiving.[b]

b Stems and Twigs.

Words in season.—A missionary had been sent for to visit a dying man. He had a long way to go, but he mounted a horse, and rode fast. He had to pass through a gate; it was closed, but at last a man came and opened it for him. "Thank you, my friend. And now tell me, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" The man stared, but making no reply, the missionary rode off. Many years afterwards he was holding a meeting, and after it was over, a gentleman begged to speak with him; and what was the surprise of the missionary when he said, "I am greatly in your debt, sir!" "In my debt? I do not understand you. I do not remember ever seeing you before." "Sir, I am in your debt more than I can ever repay you, for through your words I have been brought to a knowledge of Christ. Do you remember riding quickly through a gate, and saying to the man who held it, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' I am that man; but then I had never heard of Christ. Your words sunk into my heart, and I asked every one I met with if they could tell me who Jesus Christ was, and why I should love Him. At last I found a pious negro woman, and she told me all you had taught her. And now I am a Christian." Thus did God bless the missionary's words.

To know really how to be happy, and how usefully to employ the little time that we have before us, is all that we need know. To divide our time well between sleep and sleep, and not to attempt to do too much—this is the only way to do anything really well. We may be content to be ignorant of other people's thoughts, but it will not do to be ignorant of our own; and yet too many of us are so. What really concerns us we often throw aside, and hunt merely after that which, when achieved, can do us little or no good.

The older a wise man gets, the wiser he grows; the fool, when he ages, becomes an old fool.

25, 26. (25) **there is**, *etc.*, ch. xiv. 12. (26) **laboureth**, *lit.* "the desire of him that laboureth," helps him in his work. **mouth**, *etc.*, lit. "*bendeth over him.*" The necessity of satisfying his appetite urges him to work.[a]

a Ecc. vi. 7; 2 Th. iii. 10—12.

Erroneous views of religion refuted (*v.* 25).—I. Some of the ways that seem right. 1. The way of gay licentiousness; 2. Of proud unbelief; 3. Of cold formality. II. Contemplate the state of those who walk in those ways, and consider the end.[b]

"The animal soul as distinguished fr the higher intellectual, moral, and religious nature, feels the pressure of life's necessities and impels to efforts for their relief." —*O. Zöckler.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

The narrow way (*v.* 25).—*Al Sirat* is a bridge extending from this world to the next, over the abyss of hell, which must be passed by every one who would enter the Mohammedan paradise. It is very narrow; the breadth being less than the thread of a famished spider, according to some writers: others compare it to the edge of a sword, or of a razor. The deceased cross with a rapidity proportioned to their virtue. Some pass with the rapidity of lightning; others with the speed of a horse at full gallop;

"Sluggish idleness—the nurse of sin."—*Spencer.*

c *Wheeler.*

others still slower, on account of the weight of their sins; and many fall down from it, and are precipitated into hell.[c]

27—30. (27) **diggeth**, *etc.*, shovels out evil. [*]He does not work to satisfy hunger, but toils hard at mischief and wickedness. "Digs an evil pit for others to fall into," Ps. vii. 15. (28) **froward**, Pr. vi. 14. **strife**, one feature of the evil at wh. he works. **whisperer**,[a] or backbiter: one who suggests, rather than states, evil things. A prater, talebearer. **separateth**, alienateth, divideth, makes misunderstandings between. **chief friends**, those in closest intimacy. (29) **violent man**, or man of mischief, ch. iii. 31, marg. (30) **shutteth**, *etc.*, as ch. vi. 12—14.[b]

a Heb. *nirgan*, fr. *narag*, to roll one-self quickly, to speak fast, to prate and babble. "There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill-interpreted."—*Bp. Patrick.*

b "The physiognomy of the slanderer, the man of Belial,—the half-closed eyes that never look you straight in the face, the restlessness or cunning of wh. biting the lips is the surest indication."—*Spk. Com.*

Mischievous men (*vv.* 27—30).—I. He searches after evil. 1. Time buries the grievances of men; 2. The mischievous man is an explorer of those tombs. II. He is inspired by evil. III. He propagates evil. 1. He produceth social strife by insinuations; 2. He leadeth astray by enticements; 3. He pursues his designs by deliberation.[c]

The backbiter.—

> He that shall rail against his absent friends,
> Or hears them scandalised, and not defends,
> Sports with their fame, and speaks whate'er he can,
> And only to be thought a witty man,
> Tells tales, and brings his friends in disesteem,
> That man's a knave—be sure beware of him.[d]

c *Dr. Thomas.*

d *Horace.*

31. **if**, this word should be omitted.[a] Old people, if they would preserve their honour, must preserve their integrity. "Grace is the glory of old age."

The old man's crown (*v.* 31).—I. Old age is attractive, because—1. Rare; 2. Suggestive; 3. But is not always beautiful. We have here two characteristics of an honourable old age. (1) The course, "way of righteousness;" (2) A difficult path to enter; (3) To keep when entered. II. The old man's crown. 1. A word on ancient crowns—the rescuer's, the civic, the mural, emblematical, triumphal, funeral crowns; the old man's crown combines them all. Learn—(1) What an admonition for youth! (2) How should we reverence old age!

Godliness makes the grey hairs of age beautiful.—"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Age invests many things with peculiar attractiveness. An aged oak, gnarled, wide-spreading, lichen-covered; an ancient castle, weather-worn and storm-swept, moss-grown and ivy-clad—both are exceedingly beautiful; but of all the attractive pictures old Time can draw, no sight is so beautiful as the silver locks and radiant features of godly and joyous old age—an aged sire, a venerable mother seated in "the old arm-chair," looking placidly back along the line of trodden years, looking hopefully forward across the bright borders of the Beulah-land, to catch a glimpse of the jasper walls which belt the city of the saints.

a Pr. iv. 10, 18, xx. 29. "As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit, so is age sweeter than youth; provided the youth were grafted into Christ." "As harvest-time is a brighter time than seed-time so is age brighter than youth; that is, if youth were a seed-time for good." "As the completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth; that is, if the foundation of the work of God were laid in youth."—*Pulsford's Quiet Hours.*

32, 33. (32) **slow to anger**, not easily roused: ch. xiv. 17, 29. **ruleth**, *etc.*,[a] here meaning the *temper*, the passionate movement and excitement of the spirit. "That is the noblest victory wh. we obtain over ourselves." (33) **lap**, or fold of the garment: sometimes called the *bosom*.[b] **disposing**, *etc.*, the

a Mat. v. 5.

b Pr. xxi. 14. "Lamentation is the only musician that always,

final decision; the result of drawing.[c] The events that seem most fortuitous are really ordered by God.

Self-conquest (*v.* 32).—I. Why is the heart's conquest greater than that of a city? 1. Because the enemy is more powerful; 2. The conflict is more difficult; 3. The victory is more noble; 4. The prize is more glorious.—*Moral heroism* (*v.* 32).—I. The enemy. 1. Our impulses; 2. Habits; 3. Prejudices; 4. Interests. II. The conquest. 1. Assault is impossible; 2. Strategy is unavailing; 3. Fame is not to be won. III. The results. 1. A noble victory, perfection of humanity; 2. A blessed peace, conscience delicate and tranquil.[d]

Casting lots.—The Greeks and Romans in doing this put into a vessel (very frequently into a helmet) the different lots marked with the names of the persons. This was violently shaken by one who turned away his face, then whosoever's lot first leaped out and fell on the ground was the person chosen. Amongst the plans adopted by the Jews, a similar mode was sometimes used. "The lot is cast into the lap," that is to say, into the bosom or midst of the vessel or urn.

like a screech owl, alights and sits on the roof of an angry man."—*Plutarch.*

"We are wont to call the doubled or folded front of the dress *the lap.*"—*O. Zöckler.*

c "How sweetly doth God dispose of all second causes, that while they do their own will they do His."—*Bp. Hall.*

Mat. x. 29, 30.

d *W. W. Whythe.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

1. better, or sweeter. **dry morsel,** *i.e.* a dry piece of bread, without any wine, or vinegar, to take with it.[a] **quietness,** freedom from quarrelling.[b] **sacrifices,** prob. not used in relig. sense, but meaning "sacrificed or slaughtered animals:" "good cheer:" sumptuous meals. "A house full of sacrifices is one abounding in sumptuous feasts."[c]

Family scenes (*vv.* 1, 2).—We have here three things which are often found in household life. I. A discontented temper. II. A worthless son. III. A valuable servant. 1. A well-tried servant gets moral influence in a house: 2. And sometimes shares the fortunes of the house. Learn—(1) That the temper of a man's soul is more important to him than his temporal condition; (2) That the power of character is superior to the power of station.[d]

Family worship.—Philip Henry was most exemplary in his practice of family devotion. Besides the regular plan of reading and expounding the Scriptures, morning and evening, he used strongly to recommend singing: saying that it was a way of exhibiting godliness, like Rahab's scarlet thread, to such as pass by our windows. His children and servants used to take notes of his expositions: and the foundation of Matthew Henry's *Commentary* was laid from these notes. Besides this, on Thursday evening, instead of reading, he used to catechise his children and servants upon the Assembly's Catechism, with the proofs, or sometimes in a smaller catechism; or else they read, and he examined them in some other useful book, as Mr. Poole's *Dialogues against the Papists;* and on Saturday evening they gave him an account of what they could remember of the chapters they had read through during the week, each a several part in order. Besides this, he had also days of humiliation with his family. The consequence was that, in addition to the blessings resulting to his own children, many who came to live with them dated their first impressions from these services, and gave God thanks that they ever came under his roof.[e]

a Pr. xv. 17; 1 Ti. vi. 6.

b "There may be peace and quietness where there are not three meals a day, provided there be a joint satisfaction in God's providence, and a mutual satisfaction in each other's prudence."—*Mat. Henry.*

c *Spk. Com.*

d *Dr. Thomas.*

A little boy, the child of irreligious parents, was visiting in a minister's family, entering heartily into all the religious exercises. One day, his mother found him praying, and said, "What are you doing?" He answered, "O, mamma! we must pray all we can while we are in Madison; 'tause der's no God in Albany."

e *Bowes.*

2. wise servant, ch. xiv. 35: such as Eliezer of Damascus, Ge. xv. 2. have rule, as Ziba, 2 Sa. xvi. 4. causeth shame,[a] *lit.* a degenerate, bad, unprofitable son. part . . brethren, *i.e.* from his place as slave he shall rise to get a place as son.

Archbishop Tillotson.—There are some children who are almost ashamed to own their parents, because they are poor, or in a low situation of life. We will therefore give an example of the contrary, as displayed by the Dean of Canterbury, afterwards Archbishop Tillotson. His father, who was a plain Yorkshireman, perhaps something like those we now call "Friends," approached the house where his son resided, and inquired whether "John Tillotson was at home." The servant, indignant at what he thought his insolence, drove him from the door; but the dean, who was within, hearing the voice of his father, instead of embracing the opportunity afforded him of going out and bringing in his father in a more private manner, came running out, exclaiming, in the presence of his astonished servants, "It is my beloved father;" and, falling down on his knees, asked for his blessing. Obedience and love to our parents is a very distinct and important command of God, upon which He has promised His blessing; and His promises never fail.[b]

3. fining pot,[a] *see* ch. xxvii. 21.[b] The intimation is that man's work of testing and trying can only concern things. Man's fining pot is for metals, he has no fining pot for hearts. God only has the power to prove and try hearts: see Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Trials polish.—It is rough work that polishes. Look at the pebbles on the shore! Far inland, where some arm of the sea thrusts itself deep into the bosom of the land, and, expanding into a salt loch, lies girdled by the mountains, sheltered from the storms that agitate the deep, the pebbles on the beach are rough, not beautiful; angular, not rounded. It is where long white lines of breakers roar, and the rattling shingle is rolled about the strand, that its pebbles are rounded and polished. As in nature, as in the arts, so in grace; it is rough treatment that gives souls, as well as stones, their lustre; the more the diamond is cut, the brighter it sparkles; and in what seems hard dealing, their God has no end in view but to perfect His people's graces. Our Father, and kindest of fathers, He afflicts not willingly; He sends tribulations, but hear Paul tell their purpose: "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope."[c]

4. wicked doer, one inwardly corrupt. Such a one readily attends to deceit, mischief, and injury when it is spoken. a liar, one full of inward insincerity and hypocrisy. naughty, or calumnious tongue. These men find food and pleasure in all kinds of wicked discourse. "Those that take the liberty to tell lies take a pleasure in hearing them told."

Lying a supposed apology for crime.—Lying supplies those who are addicted to it with a plausible apology for every crime, and with a supposed shelter from every punishment. It tempts them to rush into danger from the mere expectation of impunity, and when practised with frequent success, it teaches them to confound the gradations of guilt, from the effects of which there is, in their imaginations at least, one sure and common protection. It corrupts the early simplicity of youth; it blasts the fairest

a Pr. x. 5.

"The author of the Prov. felt keenly on this point, and had bitter apprehensions, wh. were too fully verified in his son's career."—*Wordsworth.*

b R. T. S.

"Family worship serves as an edge or border, to preserve the web of life from unravelling."—*Robert Hall.*

a "The art of smelting ore, wh. must have been known to the Israelites fr. the time of their sojourning in Egypt, but had probably been brought into fresh prominence through intercourse with the Phœnicians and with Sheba, here becomes a parable."—*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. xxvi. 2; Je. xvii. 10; Mal. iii. 3; 1 Pe. i. 7.

c Dr. Guthrie.

"Falsehood is fire in stubble; it likewise turns all the light stuff around it into its own substance for a moment, one crackling, blazing moment, and then dies; and all its contents are scattered in the wind, without place or evidence of their existence, as viewless as the wind which scatters them."—*S. T. Coleridge.*

blossoms of genius; and will most assuredly counteract every effort by which we may hope to improve the talents and mature the virtues of those whom it infects.[a]

[a] *Dr. Parr.*

5, 6. (5) **mocketh**, *etc.*, ch. xiv. 31. **glad at calamities**, by wh. men are sometimes suddenly made poor. Rejoicing in evil that befalls others is one of the most hateful forms of sin **unpunished**, *Heb.* "held innocent." They shall surely come into the judgments of God.[a] (6) **children's children**,[b] descendants in two or three generations to continue the family name and estate. **fathers**, or honoured ancestors. Parents rejoice in a virtuous line of descendants; children in a virtuous ancestry.

[a] Ezc. xxv. 6, 7.

[b] "The pride and honour of the grey-headed is the family circle that surrounds them, or the advancing series of their children, grand-children, etc."—*O. Zöckler.*

Loveliness of children.—

I look'd upon their loveliness,
And sought through nature for similitudes
Of perfect beauty, innocence, and bliss;
And fairest imagery around me thronged;
Dewdrops at day-spring on a seraph's locks,
Roses that bathe about the well of life,
Young loves, young hopes, dancing on morning's cheek,
Gems leaping in the coronet of love.
So beautiful, so full of life, they seem'd,
As made entire of beams of angel's eyes.
Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely little things!
Playing around the den of sorrow, clad
In smiles, believing in their fairy hopes,
And thinking man and woman! all joy,
Happy all day, and happy all the night.
. . . . . .
Living jewels dropp'd unstained from heaven.[c]

That was a beautiful motto of Tyndale, the translator of the English Bible, who was an earnest preacher and teacher—"Banish me to the poorest corner of the world if you please, but let me teach little children and preach the Gospel."

[c] *Pollok.*

7, 8. (7) **excellent speech**, *Heb.* "a lip of excellency." Perhaps an assuming, imperious style of speech. Such from the fool would only create laughter. It would be unsuitable: character and style would not match. **lying lips**, such as could not be trusted or relied on. **prince**, or noble, princely-minded. To such, crafty sly artifices of speech are very unbecoming. (8) **gift**, or bribe. The tone of this verse is half satirical. **precious stone**, dazzling the eyes of him that receives it.[a] **turneth**, a well-cut jewel sparkles in every direction.

[a] "One so corrupt as to take a bribe, evinces his high estimate of it by subjection to its influence."—*Faussett.*

Ex. xxiii. 8; Pr. xviii. 16, xix. 6. *v.* 7. *T. Halliday*, i.

Truth rewarded.—Hegiage was a celebrated Arabian warrior, but ferocious and cruel. Among a number of prisoners whom he had condemned to death was one who, having obtained a moment's audience, said, "You ought, sir, to pardon me, because, when Abdarrahman was cursing you, I represented to him that he was wrong; and ever since that time I have lost his friendship." Hegiage asked him if he had any witness of his having done this: and the soldier mentioned another prisoner, who was likewise about to suffer death. The prisoner was called and interrogated, and, having confirmed the fact, Hegiage granted the first his pardon. He then asked the witness if he had likewise taken his part against Abdarrahman. But he, still respecting truth, answered that he had not, because he believed it was not his duty to do so. Hegiage, notwithstanding his ferocity, was struck with the prisoner's greatness of spirit. "Well," said he,

The heights of Mount Taurus are infested by eagles, who prey upon any cranes that may fly near them. When flying, the crane keeps up a constant cackle. This noise brings the eagles down upon them. It is said that the older cranes, sensible of their weakness, before they venture upon a flight,

take a stone in their mouths large enough to enforce silence.

after a moment's pause, "suppose I were to grant you life and liberty, should you still be my enemy?" "No," said the prisoner. "That's enough," said Hegiage; "your bare word is sufficient: you have given undoubted proof of your love for truth. Go, preserve the life that is less dear to you than honour and sincerity: your liberty is the just reward of your virtue."

9, 10. (9) **covereth,** casteth a veil over it: is unwilling to blazon it abroad, but helps the sinner to recover himself from it. **seeketh love,** tries to act on the principle of "charity," wh. "hideth a multitude of sins." **repeateth,** *etc.*, talks about it; spreads evil report.[a] **separateth,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xvi. 28. (10) **reproof,** wh. is correction by counsel. **entereth,** *Heb.* "aweth;" has a more gracious and humbling influence upon. **stripes,** wh. are correction by blows and bodily sufferings.

The talebearer.—In the common form of a prying disposition the talebearer incurs the penalty of no one trusting him with a secret, except for publication. In this case they use him for a live advertisement, like the bill-carriers in the streets, with whom he only differs in the fact that they carry their bills openly and "above board," and he secretly, and like a spaniel, between his teeth. Every social circle has some such amateur gazette, who lives, like a soldier's dog, on the bits and scraps he picks up in the barracks, and whose office it is to fetch and carry for every man in the regiment. Thus it is no such honourable pest, nor half so innocent, as its animal prototype. The poor dog, at least, wags no man's tail but his own: but the biped talebearer is a mischievous wag with other people's. Whether his motive be gossiping or malevolence, it is equally annoying and destructive of social peace and confidence. "The words of a talebearer," said the Proverb, "are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts."[b]

11, 12. (11) **evil man, or a contumacious person.**[a] **rebellion,** is always on the outlook for opportunity of making disturbance. **cruel messenger,**[b] one sent to put him out of the way of making trouble. "The king's officer sent to punish him." (12) **bear . . whelps,** the strongest type of brute ferocity. **in his folly,** *i.e.* in one of his paroxysms of folly.

Note on v. 12.—The furious passions of the female bear never mount so high, nor burn so fiercely, as when she happens to be deprived of her young. When she returns to her den, and misses the objects of her love and care, she becomes almost frantic with rage. Disregarding every consideration of danger to herself, she attacks with intense ferocity every animal that comes in her way, "and, in the bitterness of her heart, will dare to attack even a band of armed men." The Russians of Kamschatka never venture to fire on a young bear when the mother is near; for if the cub drop, she becomes enraged to a degree little short of madness; and if she get sight of the enemy, will only quit her revenge with her life. "A more desperate attempt, therefore, can scarcely be performed than to carry off her young in her absence. The moment she returns and misses them her passions are inflamed; her scent enables her to track the plunderer; and unless he has reached some place of safety before the infuriated animal overtake him, his only safety is in dropping one of the cubs, and continuing to flee; for the mother, atten-

a "The warning is directed against the tendency which leads a man to dwell with irritating iteration on a past offence, instead of burying it in oblivion."—*Spk. Com.*

1 Ti. v. 13.

v. 9. *T. Knowles,* i. 253.

"As empty vessels make the loudest sound, so they that have the least wit are the greatest babblers."—*Plato.*

b *J. B. Owen.*

a "There are some that are actuated by a spirit of opposition, that will contradict for contradiction sake, that will go on frowardly in their wicked ways in spite of all restraint and check."—*Mat. Henry.*

b 1 Ki. ii. 29—34.

v. 11. *H. Grove,* i. 141; *J. Grose,* i. 143.

C. J. Furlong, 151.

"Had I a careful and pleasant companion, that should show me my angry face in a glass, I should not at all take it

tive to its safety, carries it home to her den before she renews the pursuit." The frantic rage of the female bear when she has lost her young gives wonderful energy to the proverb of Solomon: "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly." Dreadful as it is to meet a bear in such circumstances, it is yet more dangerous to meet a "fool in his folly," a furious and revengeful man, under the influence of his impetuous passions, and his heart determined on their immediate gratification. Naturally stubborn and cruel as the bear, and equally devoted to his lusts as she is to her young, he pursues them with equal fury and eagerness. It is possible to escape the vengeance of a bereaved bear by surrendering part of the litter, and diverting part of her pursuit; but no consideration of interest or duty, no partial gratifications, can arrest his furious career, or divert his attention. Reason, degraded and enslaved, lends all her remaining wisdom and energy to passion, and renders the fool more cruel and mischievous than the bear, in proportion as she is superior to instinct.[c]

13, 14. (13) **evil for good,**[a] evil in the sense of injury. **evil . . house,** evil in the sense of misfortune. "The punishments of ingratitude descend to a man's posterity."[b] (14) **letteth out water,** easy to let out, very difficult to restrain when once loosened.[c] **meddled with,** before it waxes warm.[d] Before it shows its teeth.[e]

Ingratitude.—Humphrey Bannister and his father were both servants to the Duke of Buckingham, and had been born in his house, and brought up by him; and when the duke was put to flight by an unfortunate accident befalling the army which he had raised against the usurper, Richard III., he, without footman or page, retired to Bannister's house, near Shrewsbury, as to a place where he had every reason in the world to look for security. Bannister, however, upon Richard's proclamation promising one thousand pounds reward to him that should apprehend the duke, betrayed his master to John Merton, High Sheriff of Shropshire, who sent his grace under a strong guard to Salisbury, where Richard then was, and there, in the market-place, the unfortunate duke was beheaded to satiate the malice of the monarch. But Divine vengeance pursued this traitor, Bannister; for demanding the reward that was the price of his master's blood, the king, forgetting that we ought to keep faith even with a bad man, refused to pay the thousand pounds, saying, "He that would be false to so good a master ought not to be encouraged." Troubles followed rapidly upon this ungrateful man. Bannister's eldest son ran mad, and died in a hogsty; his second son became deformed and lame: his third son was drowned in a small puddle of water; his eldest daughter was grievously injured for life by one of his carters: and his second was seized with a leprosy, whereof she died: and to complete these dreadful visitations, Bannister himself was hanged for manslaughter.[f]

15, 16. (15) **justifieth,**[a] *etc.*, he who treats the unjust as though he were just, and the just as though he were unjust. So confusing moral relations. **abomination,** or abhorrence. (16) **price,** or wealth. Render, "Why is there a price in the hand of a fool? Is it to get wisdom when he has no heart for it?"[b]

Francis I.—Chabot, a distinguished admiral in the reign of

ill. Some are wont to have a looking-glass held to them while they wash, though to little purpose; but to behold a man's self so unnaturally disguised and disordered, will conduce not a little to the impeachment of anger."—*Plutarch.*

c Paxton.

a Comp. Ro. xii. 17; 1 Th. v. 15; 1 Pe. iii. 9.

"To render good for evil is Divine; good for good is human; evil for evil is brutish; evil for good is devilish."—*Bridges.*

b Nicholls.

c "He who begins strife is like him that tears away the dam fr. the waters."—*Luther.*

d Gesenius.

e Hitzig.

v. 13. *W. Jay,* vi. 306; *F. Elwin,* i. 22.

vv. 13, 14. *Dr. J. Paterson,* 391.

"One year of love would do more towards setting us mutually right, when we are wrong, than a millennium of wrangling."—*Dr. Mas[illegible].*

f The Quiver.

a Justify, a forensic term, meaning to declare righteous, to acquit.

b "Why is he, as it were, sent into

the market with so much money in his hand for buying wisdom, and his heart is not set on the purchase?"—*Wordsworth.*

Francis I., of France, fell under the displeasure of his sovereign, who issued a commission to the Chancellor Poyet, and other judges, to bring the admiral to trial, on an indictment preferred against him by the royal advocate. The chancellor was a man of unlimited ambition, and hoping to please the king by condemning the admiral, seduced some of the judges by promises, and others by threats, to join him in his decision. Though nothing could be proved against the admiral, yet the chancellor and judges decreed the confiscation of his estate, dismissal from all his offices, and imprisonment. The king learning of the artifice by which such a judgment had been obtained against the admiral, instantly restored him to his estate and his liberty, and caused the chancellor to be degraded.[c]

c Percy Anec.

17, 18. (17) **friend,** *etc.*, ch. xviii. 24. **a brother,** better, he is a brother, more than a friend, in the time of adversity.[a] **born for,** the time of adversity brings him out and shows him at his best. (18) **striketh hands,** in making bargains, without duly weighing the responsibilities under wh. he comes. **in .. friend,** in opposition to his advice.[b]

a In adversity he becomes a brother.

b Pr. vi. 1—5, xi. 15.

A brother's highest use (*v.* 17).—I. Adversity is the common lot of brotherhood. II. The ties of brotherhood are formed for adversity. III. Adversity tends to sanctify the intercourse of the brotherhood. IV. In adversity we are led to know, in an especial manner, the presence of the Elder Brother with the brotherhood. V. It is by adversity that the whole brotherhood are gathered at last into our Father's house above.[c]

c Studies for the Pulpit.

Suretyship.—The Hindoo proverb says, "He who stands before may have to pay." This, therefore, is the idea of a surety. He stands before the debtor, and covenants with the creditor for the payment of the money; he, therefore, who stands before, is literally betwixt the contending parties. In this respect "was Jesus made a surety" for us; He stood before and between, and thus became our *Mesites*, or "Mediator." The melancholy instances of ruin, in consequence of becoming surety for others, are exceedingly numerous in the East. Against this they have many proverbs and fearful examples; but nothing seems to impart wisdom. Nearly all the Government monopolies, both amongst native and European rulers, are let to the highest bidders: thus, the privilege of searching for precious stones in certain districts, of taking up the chiar root, salt-rents, and the fishing for chanks or pearls, are severally confined to those who pay a fixed sum to Government. As the whole of the money cannot be advanced till a part of the produce be sold, suretics have to be accounted for the amount. But as men generally enter into these speculations in order to better a reduced fortune, an extravagant price is often paid, and ruin is the consequence both to the principal and his surety. This practice of suretyship, however, is also common in the most trifling affairs of life: *Pareellutha-ronum*, that is, "Sign your name," is a request preferred by every one who is desirous of obtaining additional security to a petty agreement. In every legal court or magistrate's office may be seen, now and then, a trio entering, thus to become responsible for the engagements of another. The cause of all this suretyship probably is the bad faith which so commonly prevails amongst the heathen.[d]

d Roberts.

"When a hunted deer runs for safeguard amongst the rest of the herd, they will not admit him into their company, but beat him off with their horns, out of principles of self-preservation. So hard it is in man or beast in misery to find a faithful friend."—*Fuller.*

"True friends visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come without invitation."—*Theophrastus.*

"Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning usefulness in which all mankind are agreed."—*Cicero.*

"Reproach, or mute disgust, is the reward of candid friendship, that disdains to hide unpalatable truth."—*Smollet.*

19—21. (19) **loveth strife,** Jas. i. 20. The quarrelsome involve themselves in guilt. **exalteth his gate,**[a] builds a stately house: a sign of ambition and arrogancy. **destruction,** it is as if he did, for he surely makes himself conspicuous to the robber, etc. (20) **froward,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xi. 20, xvi. 20. (21) **begetteth,** *etc.*, ch. x. 1.

Danger of ambition.—Matthew Henry gives the general bearing of this passage when he says, "Those that are ambitious and aspiring expose themselves to a great deal of trouble, such as many times ends in their ruin. He that exalteth his gate builds a stately house, at least a fine frontispiece, that he may overtop and outshine his neighbours; he seeks his own destruction, and takes a deal of pains to ruin himself; he makes his gate so large, that his house and estate go out at it." The moral here suggested is, that extravagance leads to ruin; or, it may be, that the most humble are the most safe. It is the practice of the Arabs to ride on horseback into the houses of those they intend to plunder, and hence the doors are designedly built low to prevent the intrusion. Thus a French abbé, describing his admission into a monastery near Jerusalem, says, "The passage is so low that it will scarcely admit a horse, and it is shut by a gate of iron, strongly secured on the inside. As soon as we entered, it was again made fast with various bolts and bars of iron—a precaution extremely necessary in a desert place, exposed to the incursions and insolent attacks of the Arabs." Among the Persians, too, the same defensive measures are employed, in order "to hinder the servants of the great from entering it on horseback, which, when any act of oppression is going on, they would make no scruple to do." "The habitation of a man in power is known by his gate," says Morier, "which is generally elevated in proportion to the vanity of its owner." Hence we see that "he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction."[b]

22, 23. (22) **merry . . good,**[a] ch. xii. 25. **medicine,** or "promoteth health." **broken spirit,** broken by afflictions or conscience of sins. **drieth the bones,** wastes the radical moisture, exhausts the very marrow. (23) **gift,** or bribe. **bosom,** fold of dress where the purse was kept.

Mirth (*v.* 22).—Bring out cheerfulness as the meaning here of mirth. Cheerfulness is a symptom of inward health, as truly as bodily alertness is of outward health. I. The primary truth in this part of the philosophy of life is, that true cheerfulness is a concern of both body and mind. II. Inasmuch as the soul has the prerogative of governing the body there are numerous happy cases in which there is a cheerful heart in a suffering frame. 1. There is something in the nature of malady or distress which does not expend its power on the mental part; 2. Cheerfulness in suffering may be due to natural elevation of spirits; 3. The only true source of genuine cheerfulness on the bed of sickness and death is the grace of God in the soul. III. Since both body and soul are made for exertion, there is nothing more conducive to cheerfulness, the result of their joint health, than fit employment. IV. But man is not merely an intellectual, he is a moral being, and hence healthful cheerfulness requires, as its indispensable condition, a good conscience. 1. Conscience of crime is a tormentor; 2. Outside crime there may be such transgression as may embitter the conscience, and make quiet impossible; 3.

a "Private houses were sometimes built ostentatiously with a lofty gateway, wh. would naturally breed jealousy in the neighbours, and invite the visits of the tax-gatherer; and in a time when law was weak and property very unsafe, might easily lead to the ruin of its owner."—*Sharpe.*

High towers must look for lightning.

"Ambition, like a torrent, ne'er looks back; it is a swelling, and the last affection a high mind can put off. It is a rebel both to soul and reason, and enforces all laws, all conscience; treads upon religion, and offers violence to nature's self."—*Ben Jonson.*

b *The Quiver.*

a *Lit.* "A merry heart giveth a happy heating."

In our mirth there is mourning, in our joy there is sorrow. Our false fears beget real grief, though the things we fear never come to pass; and as if our present miseries were not enough to make our lives miserable, we torment ourselves in laying hold of those we have already suffered, and fear those that are to come, by which means we many

times torment ourselves before the time.

b Dr. J. W. Alexander, New York.

"There is nothing like fun, is there? I haven't any myself, but I do like it in others. Oh, we need it. We need all the counterweights we can muster to balance the sad relations of life. God has made sunny spots in the heart; why should we exclude the light from them?"—*Haliburton.*

c Cheever.

"Wicked mirth never true pleasure brings; but honest minds are pleased with honest things."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

"Thou art the only comfort of my age: like an old tree, I stand amongst the storms; thou art the only limb that I have left me, my dear green branch! and how I prize thee, child, heaven only knows."—*Lee.*

a Dr. Bushnell.

"In exalting the faculties of the soul, we annihilate, in a great degree, the delusion of the senses."—*Aimé Martin.*

"To be perfectly just is an attribute of Divine nature; to be so to the utmost of our abilities,

Even in the narrowest sense a good conscience promotes ease of mind; 4. There is no such thing as a good conscience, except where there is a persuasion of acceptance with God, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.[b]

Sir Matthew Hale.—Another passage fell out in one of his circuits, which was somewhat censured as an affection of unreasonable strictness; but it flowed from the exactness of the rules he had set himself. A gentleman had sent him a buck for his table that had a trial at the assizes: so, when he heard his name, he asked "if he was not the same person that had sent him venison." And finding that he was the same, he told him "he could not suffer the trial to go on till he had paid him for his buck." To which the gentleman answered, "that he never sold his venison, and that he had done nothing to him which he did not do to every judge that had gone that circuit," which was confirmed by several gentlemen then present; but all would not do, for the Lord Chief Baron had learned from Solomon that "a gift perverteth the ways of judgment," and therefore he would not suffer the trial to go on till he had paid for the present; upon which the gentleman withdrew the record. And at Salisbury, the dean and chapter having, according to custom, presented him with six sugar loaves in his circuit, he made his servants pay for the sugar before he would try their cause.[c]

24, 25. (24) **before**, *i.e.* in the sight of; in the presence of. **understanding**, *i.e.* the discerning man. **ends . . earth**, wandering anywhere; not directly applied to the matter in hand. He thinks of everything but that with wh. he is immediately concerned. (25) **grief**, or cross, vexation, see *v.* 21.

Authority of parents.—It is a great mistake to suppose that what will make a child stare, or tremble, impresses more authority. The violent emphasis, the hard, stormy voice, the menacing air, only weakens authority; it commands a good thing as if it were only a bad, and fit to be no way impressed, save by some stress of assumption. Let the command be always given quietly, as if it had some right in itself and could utter itself to the conscience by some emphasis of its own. Is it not well understood that a bawling and violent teamster has no real government of his team? Is it not practically seen that a skilful commander of one of those huge floating cities, moved by steam on our American waters, manages and works every motion by the waving of a hand, or by signs that pass in silence—issuing no order at all, save in the gentlest undertone of voice? So when there is, or is to be, a real order and law in the house, it will come of no hard and boisterous, or fretful and termagant way of commandment. Gentleness will speak the word of firmness, and firmness will be clothed in the airs of true gentleness.[a]

26. **for equity**, better read, "is not equity." To strike one who is noble is against right. It may, however, mean to strike a prince for judging right.

Queen Elizabeth. — Sir Walter Raleigh observes of Queen Elizabeth, that she would set the reason of her meanest subjects against the authority of her greatest counsellors. By this means she raised the ordinary customs of London about fifty thousand pounds a year, without any additional impost. When Lord Burleigh, the Earl of Leicester, and Secretary Walsingham had

set themselves so much against a poor waiter of the Custom-house, called Cardwarder, as to command the grooms of the chamber to refuse him admission to the queen, she sent for him, and listened to his petition and advice. It was in vain that her ministers told her she disgraced them, and lessened her own dignity, by giving ear to the complaints of busy meddlers. She used to say, that if men should complain unjustly against her ministers, she knew well enough how to punish them; but if they had reason for the complaint they offered her, she was queen of all, the small as well as the great, and would not suffer herself to be besieged by servants, who could have no motive for wishing it, but their interest in the oppression of others.[a]

27, 28. (27) spareth, does not give them forth too freely.[a] excellent, or *cool* spirit; calm, not excited to vain conversation. (28) holdeth his peace, does not utter and show what is in him, may pass for a wise man. Silence is good.[b] The man who says little may learn much. The man who is constantly talking learns little.

Small talking.—

The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate:
Yes, ma'am, and no, ma'am, uttered softly show
Every five minutes, how the minutes go:
Each individual suffering a constraint,
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint;
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection, and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly, and by stealth,
Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs and rheums, and phthisic and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,
Filled up at last with interesting news,
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed;
But fear to call a more important cause,
As if 'twere treason against English laws.
The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,
As from a seven years' transportation, home,
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,
Recovering what we lost we know not how,
The faculties that seemed reduced to nought,
Expression and the privilege of thought.[c]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1. through . . wisdom, the marg. gives a dif. turn to this passage. "He that separateth himself seeketh according to his desire, and rushes forward against all wise counsel." The idea of the orig. may be thus interpreted: "Through self-love a man, having separated himself, seeks (only his own interest), rebels against all wisdom;" cares nothing for counsel, but is hurried on recklessly by his wilfulness towards his own private ends.[a] In-

is the glory of man."—*Addison.*

a Percy Anec.

a "The more a man knows the less he is apt to talk; for his wisdom gives him such an excellent composure of spirit that it represses his heat, his forwardness and haste, and makes him coolly deliberate what and when it is fit to speak."—*Bp. Patrick.*

b "Silence may be eloquence, and speak thy worth above the power of words."—*Sir Thos. Browne.*

"If the silence of the wise is wisdom, much more is a tongue-tied condition expedient for a fool."—*Jacox.*

"Even triviality, imbecility, that can sit silent, how respectable is it in comparision with the vapid verbiage of shallow praters!"—*Carlyle.*

c Cowper.

a Bertheau, Wordsworth, etc.

"The precept may be taken as a warning against self-will and the self-assertion wh. exults in differ-

ing from the received customs and opinions of mankind."—*Spk. Com.*

"Other com. take the expression in an unsocial and misanthropic spirit, 'separates himself from intercourse with others,' 'separateth himself,' as *Zöckler.*

"The recluse seeks his own pleasure or inclination; he laughs at or derides everything solid or wise."—*Parkhurst.*

"A retired man pursueth the researches he delighteth in, and hath pleasure in every branch of science."—*Wardlaw.*

b Dr. Thomas.

v. 1. *J. Seed,* i. 197.

c R. T. S.

"When night hath set her silver lamp on high, then is the time for study: when heaven's light pours itself on the page, like prophecy on time, ungloom-ing all its mighty meanings; it is then we feel the sweet strength of the stars, and magic of the moon."—*Bailey.*

"If you devote your time to study, you will avoid all the irksomeness of this life; nor will you long for the approach of night, being tired of the day; nor will you be a burden to yourself, nor your society insupportable to others."—*Seneca.*

d R. T. S.

terpretations, however, greatly differ: the chief varieties are indicated in the margin.

The student's spirit (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. It is an isolating spirit. Feels it necessary to withdraw into solitude and silence. II. An investigating spirit. 1. Wisdom to guide men in their material concerns; 2. In their spiritual concerns. III. A wise spirit. 1. He is wise who seeks knowledge; 2. Knowledge gives us a new world; 3. New sources of pleasure; 4. New faculties of action.[b]

Pascal.—Blaise Pascal was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, in 1623. He never had any preceptor but his father. It was his habit, when very young, if he met with anything which he could not clearly understand, never to rest satisfied until he had received a thorough explanation of it from some one. It is related of him that one day when he was at dinner somebody at table happened to strike a china plate with a knife; he noticed that the plate made a great sound, and that the sound stopped immediately when the hand was laid upon it. He inquired the reason: and from this simple circumstance he was led to make a variety of experiments, the result of which was that at twelve years of age he had composed a very able treatise on sound. So great a turn had he for mathematics that he learned, or rather invented, geometry when he was but twelve years old: for his father was unwilling to initiate him in that science early, for fear of its diverting him from the study of the languages. At sixteen, he composed a curious mathematical piece. About nineteen, he invented his machine of arithmetic, which has been much admired by the learned. He afterwards employed himself assiduously in making experiments, according to the new philosophy, and particularly improved upon those of Toricellius.[c]—*Master Heyne.*—Professor Heyne, of Gottingen, was one of the greatest classical scholars of his own or any other age, and one of the most striking instances of the love of knowledge triumphing over the difficulties attending its attainment. His parents were exceedingly poor, and were frequently distressed on account of their inability to procure food for their children. They sent him, however, to a child's school in the suburbs of the small town of Chemnitz, in Saxony, where they resided; and he soon exhibited an uncommon desire of acquiring information. He made so rapid a progress in the humble branches of knowledge taught in the school, that before he had completed his tenth year, he paid a portion of his school fees by teaching a little girl, the daughter of a wealthy neighbour, to read and write. He then desired to learn Latin, and was, he tells us, perfectly intoxicated with joy when a baker in the neighbourhood undertook, ragged and barefoot as he was, to pay the required fee for him. In two years his teacher told him that he had taught him all he knew. He went to the University of Leipsic with about four shillings in his pocket, and was greatly indebted for his food to the kindness of the maid-servant of the house where he lodged. He was resolved to try, he said, whether, although fortune had thrown him among the dust, he could not be able to rise by his own efforts. His ardour in the prosecution of his studies increased with his difficulties. For six months he allowed himself but two nights' sleep in the week; and for many years continued to make great sacrifices, till he was at length chosen Professor of Greek in the University of Gottingen, where he died in 1812.[d]

2, 3. (2) **understanding**, in getting knowledge, especially self-knowledge, which makes a man modest and humble. **discover itself**, by overmuch and foolish talk, about himself and his opinions, which only display his folly.[a] (3) **also contempt**,[b] that is, along with the wicked, bec. wickedness is contemptible in itself and in its influence. **ignominy**, or baseness, the inward condition fr. wh. wicked acts spring. **reproach**, wh. is the manifestation of the contempt felt.

Wickedness (*v.* 3).—The words suggest—I. That wickedness is a contemptible thing. 1. When it comes into political life it brings contempt on the nation; 2. When it comes into ecclesiastical life it brings contempt upon the Church. II. It is a contemptuous thing.[c]

Mental frivolity.—If over that little heap of dust you hold a good magnet, should there be present a nail, or a needle, or a few iron filings, they will at once spring up and cling to the attracting bar. And were there only a magnet strong enough, it might soon become the monopolist of that metal, which, after all, is more precious than silver or gold. If now, on your coat-sleeve, or on the woollen table-cover, you rub a stick of wax or amber, you impart to this substance also an attractive power. But it is a magnet of a very different sort. Hold it ever so near that knife or needle, and there is no movement. Hold it near the carpet, or, better still, insinuate it into some unswept corner, and every loose particle, the thread-clippings and paper-shavings, the stray feathers and silky fibres, will instantly leap up to it, and convert its bald apex into a little mass of rubbish. Some minds have a powerful affinity for what is sterling and useful. Themselves strong, like the loadstone, they are constantly acquiring facts, and principles, and maxims of wisdom. They gain the respect of others. They become master-spirits, moving and controlling their fellows. If in business, they turn out successful merchants: if students, they step forth the chiefs of their profession; if thrown into public life, they graduate into the highest ranks of statesmanship, and become the moulders of an age, the disposers of an empire, the movers of mankind. But some minds have an attraction quite as intense for what is frivolous. In early life they do not "take to" tasks and lessons; and all throughout they retain the intellectual languor, which deprecates instruction and refuses to apply. Their theory of life is perpetual recreation, and ignoring the commandment which says, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work," they never know the sweetness of a true Sabbatic repose. Unused to self-denial, and seldom roused to exertion, if they enter business you soon hear that they have "stopped;" and in a learned profession, if they do not "stop," it is only because they never could get on.[d]—*William Jones.*—When Sir William Jones was but a youth, he was regarded as almost a miracle of industry and attainments. He used to relate, that when he was only three or four years of age, if he applied to his mother, a woman of uncommon intelligence and acquirements, for information, her constant answer to him was, "Read, and you will know." He thus acquired a passion for books, which only grew in strength with increasing years. Even at school, his voluntary exertions exceeded in amount his prescribed tasks: so that Dr. Thackeray, one of his masters, used to say, that he was

[a] Comp. Pr. xii. 23, xiii. 16, xv. 2, *etc.*

"What a discovery is the discovery of a fool's heart! It is a discovery of ignorance, carnality, selfishness, and vanity."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

[b] Pr. xi. 2.

[c] *Dr. Thomas.*

"Men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their mind with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to obtain the victory of wit and contradiction; and sometimes for lucre and possession; but seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason for the benefit and use of man."—*Lord Bacon.*

[d] *Excelsior.*

"*A.* If I do this, what further can I do? *B.* Why, more than ever. Every task thou dost, brings strength and capability to act. He who doth climb the difficult mountain's top will the next day outstrip an idler man. Dip thy young brain in wise men's deep discourse,—in books; which though they breeze thy wit awhile, will knit thee, i' the end, with wisdom."—*Cornwall.*

"Education, indeed, has made the fondness for fine things next to natural: the corals and bells teach infants on the breast to be delighted with sound and glitter."—*H. Brooke.*

e R. T. S.

a Pr. xx. 5; Ecc. vii. 24.

b "Wise speech is like an exhaustless stream of benefit."—*Fausset.*

"The contrast of the r. may, however, be bet. the deep waters of a *tank*, and the fresh, clear waters of a spring."—*Spk. Com.*

c De. i. 16, 17; Le. xix. 15.

d Dr. Thomas.

v. 4. *Dr. Watts*, ii. 122.

e R. T. S.

"But when deserted by ungrateful friends, delightful studies make some small amends; at least, the mind from troubles disengage, and smooth the harsh severities of age; enrich our souls for greater joys above, where all is glory, ecstasy, and love."—*Geist.*

"A vine or a rose tree may as well flourish when there is a secret worm lurking and gnawing at the root of them, as the peace of those societies thrive that have

a boy of so active a mind, that if he were left naked and friendless on Salisbury Plain, he would, nevertheless, find the road to fame and riches. At this time he was frequently in the habit of devoting whole nights to study, when he would generally take coffee or tea to keep off sleep. Even then, merely to divert his leisure, he commenced the study of the law; and it is related, that he would often amuse and surprise his mother's legal acquaintances by putting cases to them from an abridgment of Coke's *Institutes*, which he had read and mastered. The extraordinary eminence to which he attained, in learning and excellence, has been well shown in the memoir of his life, written by the late Lord Teignmouth.[e]

4, 5. (4) **deep waters**, difficult to fathom and exhaust.[a] A description true only of the words of discreet and wise men. **flowing brook**, one that never dries up, but continually pours down its refreshing streams.[b] The wise man's speech is clean and fresh, cleansing and refreshing. (5) **accept the person**, to take sides with him; show unjust favour to him. **to overthrow**, repeat the words *it is not good* before this second clause. To disregard their plea, and favour the wicked.[c]

Three bad things (*r.* 5).—I. Voluntary connection with wicked men is bad—1. Matrimonially; 2. Mercantilely; 3. Politically; 4. Ecclesiastically. II. The overthrow of good men. 1. Sometimes in social life; 2. Sometimes in judicial courts. III. The overthrow of good men by the employment of the wicked. Learn:—1. Shun the wicked; 2. Adhere to the righteous.[d]

Disputes.—A gentleman who was in company with Mr. Newton lamented the violent disputes that often take place among Christians respecting the non-essentials of Christianity, and particularly Church government. "Many," he said, "seem to give their chief attention to such topics, and take more pleasure in talking on these disputable points, than on spiritual religion, the love of Christ, and the privileges of His people." "Sir," said the venerable old man, "did you ever see a whaleship? I am told that when the fish is struck with the harpoon, and feels the smart of the wound, it sometimes makes for the boat, and would probably dash it to pieces. To prevent this, they throw a cask overboard; and when it is staved to pieces they throw over another. Now, sir," added Mr. Newton, "Church government is the tub which Satan throws out to the people of whom you speak."[e]—*Classical composition and English prose.*—Indeed, the study of Greek and Latin composition has distinctly injured our own English language, and done mischief to some of our great writers. Milton himself did not escape the taint. . . . It had its share in producing the feeble voice of the Elizabethan euphuism, with its falsetto tones and vaporous inanities. . . . It was especially to the patronage of Latin verse that we owe the "poetic phraseology"—that is, the gaudy and artificial inaccuracy—of such passages as Dryden's once-famous, now justly-ridiculed, description of night. To this, more than to any other cause, no less an authority than Wordsworth attributed the monotonous conventionality of the school inaugurated by Pope. To it we owe the meaningless ornamentation which spoils the poetry of Gray, and which produced such lines as—

"And *reddening* Phœbus lifts his *golden* fires;"

a line which has in it a fine flavour of compulsory Latin verse-writing. . . . Among our best and finest writers are those who have drunk simply and solely at "the pure well of English undefiled." Is it conceivable that Shakespeare or Burns would have written as they have written, if they had been drilled for years in Latin verse?[f]

6, 7. (6) **into contention,**[a] are ever ready to join in disputes and quarrellings. The fool is easily offended.[b] **for strokes,** or stripes. He says such things as deserve to be punished with strokes. (7) **destruction,** brings on him destruction. **snare,** bringing in the figure of the huntsman.[c]

The fool's tongue (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. Its characteristics. 1. Haste · "enters into contention;" 2. Ignorant · "calleth," etc. II. Its fruit: destruction. Destroys any reputation for wisdom he may accidentally gain: exposes his character for profanity, etc.

Suffering death while feigning it.—One day, as Archbishop Leighton was going from Glasgow to Dumblane, there happened a tremendous storm of lightning and thunder. He was observed, when at a considerable distance, by two men of bad character. They had not courage to rob him; but wishing to fall on some method to extort money from him, one said, "I will lie down by the wayside as if I were dead, and you shall inform the archbishop that I was killed by the lightning, and beg money of him to bury me." When the archbishop arrived at the spot, the wicked wretch told the fabricated story: the archbishop sympathised with the survivor, gave him money, and proceeded on his journey. But when the man returned to his companion, he found him really lifeless! Immediately he began to exclaim aloud, "Oh, sir, he is dead! Oh, sir, he is dead!" On this, the archbishop, discovering the fraud, left the man with this important reflection: "It is a dangerous thing to trifle with the judgments of God"!

8, 9. (8) **talebearer,** or whisperer, ch. xvi. 28: backbiter. **wounds,** this is better rendered, "dainties," "pleasant words," only too readily welcomed, and, once admitted, gaining a central settled place.[a] **innermost parts,** *lit.* chambers: recesses of man's nature; there to be stored up for mischievous use. (9) **slothful,** and so fails to get. **brother,** or one in effect, just like. **waster,**[b] who uselessly squanders what he does get. "Wastefulness implies a lack of that sense of individual responsibility apart from which there is no virtue."[c]

Talebearer and talehearer.—As there is a parity of guilt between the thief and the receiver, so there seems to be the like between the teller and the hearer of a malicious report; and that upon very great reason. For who would knock where he despaired of entrance? or what husbandman would cast his seed but into an open and a prepared furrow? So it is most certain that ill tongues would be idle if ill ears were not open. And therefore it was an apposite saying of one of the ancients that both the teller and the hearer of false stories ought to be equally hanged, but one by the tongue, the other by the ears; and were every one of them so served, I suppose nobody would be so fond of those many mischiefs brought by such persons upon the peace of the world as to be concerned to cut them down, unless, perhaps, by cutting off the forementioned parts by which they hung.[d]—

such concealed plagues wrapped up in their hearts and bowels."—*Dr. South.*

f Dr. Farrar.

a Comp. Pr. xix. 29.

b "I consider your very testy and quarrelsome people in the same light I do a loaded gun, wh. may by accident go off and kill me."—*Shenstone.*

c "When a fool, by his foolish speaking, has run himself into a premunire, and thinks to bring himself off by justifying or excusing what he has said, his defence proves his offence, and his lips are still the snare of his soul, entangling him yet more and more."—*Matt. Henry.*

d Cheever.

a "Scl. is here describing the greedy avidity with which some men gulp down slander and calumny, as if they were dainty and delicious viands; and the care with wh. they retain them, and lay them up as in a chamber or store-room, as if they were something wholesome and precious, although they come from the mouth of one whom they know to be a talebearer and backbiter."—*Wordsworth.*

b Lit. *master of wasting, i.e.* great prodigal.

c Dav. Thomas, D.D.

Female busybodies.—

But never more than once
Let me repeat it, never let the wise
Give females license to frequent his house,
And hold free converse with his wife: for these
To ill are shrewd instructors: through the hope
Of sordid lucre one corrupts his wife;
One, who hath fallen from virtue, like herself
Wishes to make her vile: and many urge,
Through wanton frowardness, their pleas to ill:
Hence the pure fountain of domestic bliss
The husband finds polluted: these against
Let him guard well his gates with locks and bolts:
For nothing good these female visitants
Work by their converse, but abundant ill.[e]

10, 11. (10) name, put for the Div. essence and attributes. The name Jehovah is the covenant name wh. pledges God's love and care.[a] strong tower, *comp.* Ps. xviii. 2, xxvii. 1, cxliv. 2. safe, or set aloft; up above danger. (11) wealth, here put in contrast with the name of God. own conceit, or imagination. Wealth is no real defence. It is very apt to fail us in the evil day. Trust in it is but building our house upon the sand.[b]

The security of those who trust in the Lord (*v.* 10).—I. What is understood by the name of the Lord? The Lord Himself. 1. He is known by the visible creation; 2. By His holy Word; 3. By His providence. II. What is implied in "the righteous runneth into it, as a strong tower"? 1. Exercise of faith; 2. Fervent prayer; 3. Diligence in duty. III. The perfect security of the righteous. 1. Wherein the safety consists—special providence, support in trial, victory over suffering: 2. The absolute certainty of this safety—the Divine perfections, God's faithful promises, the experience of saints.[c]—*The name of the Lord a strong tower* (*v.* 10).—To elucidate this passage, we will endeavour to unfold—I. The character of God—1. As described by Himself; 2. As revealed to us in Jesus Christ. II. Let us contemplate the interest we have in it. 1. He is a place of defence; 2. The righteous only run into it; 3. Such are safe. Apply:—(1) Study much the character of God; (2) Maintain constant and intimate communion with Him; 3. Assure yourselves of the safety which you are privileged to enjoy.[d]

The danger of conceit.—The vainglorious man looks upon himself through a false glass, which makes everything seem fairer and greater than it is: and this flatuous humour filleth the empty bladder of his vast thoughts with so much wind of pride that he presumes that Fortune, who hath once been his good mistress, should ever be his handmaid. But let him know that the wings of self-conceit, wherewith he towereth so high, are but patched and pieced up of borrowed feathers, and that, too, in the soft wax of uncertain hope, which, in the encounter of very small heat of danger, will melt, and fail him at his greatest need; for Fortune deals with him as the eagle with the tortoise—she carries him the higher, that she may break him the easier. It would, therefore, be good advice, that in the midst of his prosperity, he should think of the world's instability, and that Fortune is constant in nothing but inconstancy.[e]—*Naturalness of conceit.*—Little localised powers, and little narrow streaks of

d Dr. South.

"The busybody is a treacherous supplanter and underminer of the peace of all families and societies; this being a maxim of an unfailing truth, that nobody ever prys into another man's concerns but with a design to do or to be able to do him a mischief."—*Dr. South.*

e Euripides.

a "The name always designates God Himself, as man knows Him, as he receives Him to his knowledge and faith, and bears Him in his heart."—*Rucetschi.*

b Mat. vii. 24—27.

c Dr. Witherspoon.

v. 10. *J. Grant*, ii. 173.

"Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons, which at the first are scarce found to distaste, but with a little act upon the blood, burn like the mines of sulphur."—*Shakespeare.*

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Men of wealth are called towers. Thus when such a person dies, it is said, 'The *pellata-koburam*, *i.e.* strong tower, has fallen.' 'I am going to my *koburam*,' says the man who is going to his powerful friend."—*Roberts.*

e Spencer.

specialised knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected. Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to the human character what salt is to the ocean, it keeps it sweet and renders it endurable. Say, rather, it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain which falls on him, and the wave in which he dips. When one has had all his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost all his illusions, his feathers soon soak through, and he will fly no more. I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles, that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not differ sensibly from a straight line.[f]

f Dr. Holmes.

12, 13. (12) **before destruction**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xvi. 18. **honour**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xv. 33. (13) **answereth**,[a] the evil indicated here is *impetuous flippancy*. "Secularly, this is beyond a doubt; judicially, here is a great outrage; socially, a something very impolite; but religiously, a thing altogether a 'shame.'"[b]

a "Cultivate self-control, free the mind from all prepossessions, shake off all mental sloth, 'be not wise in your own conceits,' and then you will listen fully to a matter before you will make an answer." — *Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"Those who take a pride in being quick commonly fall under the just reproach of being impertinent." — *Mat. Henry.*

Job xxxii. 4, 10, 11.

b Miller.

Audi alteram partem (*v.* 13).—I. How this is done. 1. When one only sees that which seems the sign of something and is not; 2. When only a part of the matter is heard; 3. When what is heard is the utterance of malice, etc. II. Why is doing so a folly and shame? 1. It exposes the hastiness of his temper; 2. The sentence he pronounces on insufficient evidence has to be reversed, or remains as a proof of his want of justice.

v. 12. *R. Greenham*, 268; *B. Beddome*, 6; *J. G. Dowling*, 375.

Honour of humility.—

The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing
Sings in the shade when all things rest;
In lark and nightingale we see
What honour hath humility.

When Mary chose the "better part,"
She meekly sat at Jesus' feet;
And Lydia's gently opened heart
Was made for God's own temple meet;
Fairest and best adorned is she
Whose clothing is humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
The most when most his soul ascends;
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility.[c]

"It is hard starving this sin; there is nothing but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lifted up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane, even dare to drink in the bowls of the sanctuary; nay, rather than starve, it will feed on the carcases of other sins."—*Gurnall.*

c J. Montgomery.

14, 15. (14) **spirit**, the highest faculty in man: but used here much in the way that we use "man's spirits." The word as used in the first clause of the verse is masculine; as used in the second clause it is feminine, as if to intimate that it had lost its manly strength.[a] **sustain**, *etc.*, or supports his sickness.[b] (15) **heart . . ear**, these are connected. The ear is the external agent in gaining knowledge, the heart, or mind, works within,

a O. Zöckler.

b "The *spirit*, which sustains, being *wounded*, no support is left, except, as implied, in God." —*Fausset.*

"This Prov. shows the need of the grace of God for the continual strengthening and lifting up of the spirit of man, and is a sequel to v. 10."—*Wordsworth.*

"Wouldst thou have a sound body? Then see to it that thou hast a joyful heart, and a good courage; a heart which is assured of the grace of God, and well content with His Fatherly ordaining."—*Zeltner.*

"No poniards are so mortal as the wounds of conscience."—*Flavel.*

studying the material stored. Both are conceived as ever earnestly active.[c]

The unbearable wound (*v.* 14).—Physical sufferings are endurable, so are merely mental sufferings: but this unbearable wound is moral: the wound of remorse, compunction, etc., the wound that Cain and Judas felt. Why? I. Because it disqualifies the mind from availing itself of any of the ordinary means of support. 1. As a conscientiousness of rectitude: 2. An unshaken confidence in God; 3. An assurance of the unavoidableness of suffering; 4. Hope in a brighter future: 5. The expressions of friendly sympathy. II. Because it impels the miud to use its chief faculties to enhance its agony. It directs thought, memory, and conscience to—1. The crimes of the past; 2. The retributive judgment of the future.[d]—*A wounded spirit* (*v.* 14).—I. Consider the case of a wounded spirit. A spirit may be deeply wounded by—1. Nervous disorders: 2. By great and long-continued afflictions: 3. By guilt upon the conscience; 4. By violent temptations; 5. By spiritual desertion. II. Administer some balm for its relief. 1. There is no affliction which is not sent by God for our good; 2. Our afflictions, of whatever kind they be, will endure but a little while; 3. In Christ there is a balm for every wound.

A wounded spirit.—"I was lately called," says one, "to visit a sick person. On entering the room, I found him very weak in body and troubled in mind. Seeing the Bible lying upon a table near the chair upon which he sat, I said, 'You have a blessed book here.' 'Yes,' he replied; 'but the sight of it is like a dagger to my heart.' 'Cannot you read it?' 'O yes, yes! I have read it again and again; but I have not properly regarded it, nor minded what I read in it; it condemus my conduct—it troubles my mind, and now—O what must become of my soul?' I could not attempt, nor did I wish, to justify such neglect; I therefore spoke in a plain manner against such a course, and at the same time pointed out Jesus as the only possible means of escape and way by which pardon and peace could be obtained. The advice seemed to increase his sorrow and anguish. I closed the affecting visit with prayer, and left the room, deeply impressed with the words of the wise man, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Not many days after, I committed the mortal part to the earth from whence it was taken, and the soul has been summoned to the bar of that God who gave it."[e]

16. **gift**, or bribe. **maketh room**, acts like the "friend at court," to introduce him to high places.[a] There are two kinds of gifts, the gift of selfishness, and the gift of kindness. **great men**, "conventional magnates, but moral serfs."[b]

The price of admission (*v.* 16).—I. What is here referred to as an object of desire? The presence of great men: toadyism. The miserable jealousies of such. II. The means to the end: bribes. 1. The gift of money to the underling; 2. Of flattery to the great one whose presence is coveted. III. The gift of knowledge, etc., will introduce us to the only great men whose acquaintance is worth having. Note—1. The ways by which some men will crawl into favour; 2. How much great men, who think they are the rulers of the world, are under the influence of underlings.

c Pr. i. 5; Phi. i. 9.

d Dr. Thomas.

v. 14. *Bp. Abernethy*, 114; *Dr. R. Harries*, 39; *Dr. C. Gibbes*, 111; *Abp. Dawes*, ii. 1; *Dr. R. South*, ix. 1; *R. Fiddes*, i. 359; *Dr. J. Trapp*, ii. 187; *Dr. W. Sherlock*, i. 144; *Dr. D. Waterland*, ix. 160; *Dr. S. Carr*, iii. 337; *Dr. H. Blair*, v. 66; *Dr. A. Rees*, i. 195.

e Whitecross.

a "The gift goeth like a lacquey before him, and ushers him into the great man's presence, and prepares a seat for him on the divan at the great man's side."—*Wordsworth.*

"Referring to Jacob's offering for the appeasing of Esau, it is said, 'Jacob did not miscalculate the

The court favourite.—When I see a gallant ship, well rigged, trimmed, tackled, manned, and munitioned, with her top and top-gallant and her spread sails proudly swelling with a full gale in fair weather, putting out of the haven into the smooth main, and drawing the spectators' eyes, with a well-wished admiration, and shortly hear of the same ship splitted against some dangerous rock, or wrecked by some disastrous tempest, or sunk by some leak sprung in her by some accident, meseemeth I see the case of some court favourite, who to-day, like Sejanus, dazzleth all men's eyes with the splendour of his glory, and with the proud and potent beak of his powerful prosperity cutteth the waves and plougheth through the praise of the vulgar, and scorneth to fear some remora at his keel below, or any cross-winds from above: and yet to-morrow, on some storms of unexpected disfavour, springs a leak in his honour, and sinks on the Syrtes of disgrace, or, dashed against the rocks of displeasure, is splitted and wrecked in the Charybdis of infamy, and so concludes his voyage in misery and misfortune. I will not therefore adventure with the greedy shepherd to change my sheep into a ship of adventure, on the sight of a calm sea. I will study to deserve my prince's favour. I will not desire to be a prince's favourite. If I fall whence I am, I can raise myself; but to be cast down thence, were to be crushed with a desperate downfall. I prefer a mediocrity, though obscure, yet safe, before a greater eminency with a far greater danger.[c]

17. **first**, or has the first telling of his tale. **own cause**, brought before the judge. A matter of dispute or controversy. **just**, he makes out a plausible case, and seems to have the right of it, until his statements are tested and compared. One-sided statements are rarely reliable. **neighbour**, the other party concerned in the matter. **searcheth him**, by giving his very different representation of the case, wh. demands a new examination of the matter at issue, and enables the first man to be cross-examined.[a]

Social disputes (*v.* 17).—I. Their settlement requires the hearing both disputants. A fact may be dealt with falsely. 1. By denial; 2. By omission; 3. By addition. II. A mutual agreement to abide by a certain test to terminate the dispute. III. The bitterness of disputes often aggravated by blood-relationships. 1. Great love has been wounded; 2. Great services have been ill-requited; 3. Great hopes are frustrated; 4. Great reluctance on the offender's side to acknowledge the fault and seek reconciliation.[b]

A timely word.—The Rev. John Owen, a pious and devoted servant of the Lord, having, on a particular occasion, endeavoured in vain to accommodate a matter in dispute between two friends, for both of whom he felt much respect, evinced the amiableness of his disposition by retiring and writing, impromptu, the following lines, which he transmitted to the disputants:—

> How rare that toil a prosperous issue finds,
> Which seeks to reconcile divided friends!
> A thousand scruples rise at passion's touch,
> This yields too little, and that asks too much.

influence of his princely offerings,' and I verily believe there is not an ameer or sheikh in all Gilead, at this day, who would not be appeased by such presents."—*Thomson.*

David, when he heard of Saul's death, took of the spoils of the Amalekites, and sent presents to all the towns and villages where he used formerly to resort; acting on the principle of the text.

Pr. xvii. 8.

b Dav. Thomas, D.D.

"Corruption wins not more than honesty."—*Shakespeare.*

c Warwick.

a "One tale is good till another is told. This appears true in private conversation, in lawsuits, before judges, and in theological controversies, and suggests the importance of hearing both sides."—*Nicholls.*

"We must remember that we have two ears, to hear both sides before we give judgment."—*Matt. Henry.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"Haste is hardly less evil than corruption, '*Audi alteram partem*' should be the rule of every judge."—*Spk. Com.*

Comp. 1 Sa. xv. 13 and 26; 2 Sa. xvi. 1—3 and xix. 26.

"'Tis a task indeed to learn to hear; in that the skill of conversation lies, that

shows or makes you both polite and wise."—*Young.*

Each wishes each with other eyes to see,
And many efforts can't make two agree:
What mediation then the Saviour showed,
Who singly reconciled us all to God!

18, 19. (18) **lot**, ch. xvi. 33. This was regarded as an appeal to the direct decision of God: and this ought at once to settle any vexed question. **parteth . . mighty**, "keeps from hostile collision those who in reliance on their physical strength are specially inclined to quarrel."[a] Arbitration takes now the position of the old *lot*. (19) **brother**, quarrels between relatives are proverbially bitter. Here an alienated or litigious brother. **bars . . castle**, hard to thrust back or to burst.[b]

Fraternal strife (*v.* 19).—I. It ought never to be necessary to win a brother. II. Should differences sever brothers, they ought to be easily overcome. III. How does the difficulty arise? 1. The previous love; 2. Too strictly insisting upon personal rights—the elder presuming, the younger envious.

Decision by lot.—In nearly all cases where reason cannot decide, or where the right of several claimants to one article has to be settled, recourse is had to the lot, which "causeth contentions to cease." Though an Englishman might not relish such a mode of having a wife assigned to him, yet many a one in the East has no other guide than this in that important acquisition. Perhaps a young man is either so accomplished, so respectable, or so rich, that many fathers aspire to the honour of calling him "son-in-law." Their daughters are said to be beautiful, wealthy, and of a good family: what is he to do? The name of each young lady is written on a separate piece of *olah*, and then all are mixed together. The youth and his friends then go to the front of the temple; and being seated, a person who is passing by at the time is called, and requested to take one of the pieces of *olah*, on which a lady's name is inscribed, and place it near the anxious candidate. This being done, it is opened; and she whose name is written there becomes his wife. Are two men inclined to marry two sisters, a dispute often arises as to whom the youngest shall be given. To cause the "contentions to cease," they again have recourse to the lot. The names of the sisters and of the disputants are written on separate pieces of *olah*, and taken to a sacred place; those of the men being put on one side and the females on the other. A person then who is unacquainted with the matter takes a piece of *olah* from each side, and the couple whose names are thus joined together become man and wife. But sometimes a wealthy father cannot decide betwixt two young men who are candidates for the hand of his daughter. What can he do? He must settle his doubts by lot. Not long ago the son of a medical man and another youth applied for the daughter of Sedambara-Suppiyan, the rich merchant. The old gentleman caused two "holy writings" to be drawn up; the names of the lovers were inscribed thereon: the son of Kandan, the doctor, was drawn forth, and the young lady became his wife. Three Brahmins, also, who were brothers, each ardently desired the hand of one female; and, after many disputes, it was settled by lot, which "causeth contentions to cease;" and the youngest of the three gained the prize. But medical men are also sometimes selected in the same way. One person tells the afflicted individual that such a doctor has far

[a] *O. Zöckler.*

[b] The closer the relationship in cases of dispute, the wider the breach, and the more difficult the reconciliation.

"Free and fair discussion will ever be found the firmest friend to truth."—*George Campbell.*

"Whoever is afraid of submitting any question, civil or religious, to the test of free discussion, is more in love with his own opinion than with truth."—*Bishop Watson.*

"It is said that when the cranes fall out among themselves, the fight is so fierce that they beat down one another, and so are taken as they fight."—*Spencer.*

"In all differences consider that both you and your enemy are dropping off, and that ere long your very memories will be extinguished."—*Aurel.*

"How sour sweet music is, when time is broke, and no proportion kept."—*Shakespeare.*

"The failings of good men are commonly more published in the world than their good deeds; and

more skill than the rest. Another says, "He! what is he but a cow-doctor? How many has he killed! Send for such a person, he will soon cure you." A third gives his counsel: "I know the man for you; he had his knowledge from the gods; send for him." The poor patient at last requests, "Select me one by lot; and as is the name, so is the doctor." But another thing has to be settled. The medical gentleman intimates that there are two kinds of medicine which appear to him to be equally good; and therefore the lot is again to decide which is best. Thus again "the lot causeth contentions to cease." [c]

20, 21. (20) **man's belly**, *etc.*, ch. xii. 14, xiii. 2. Belly is used to represent the "inward man." "The words may be rendered,—a man's moral self shall be satisfied." [a] **fruit of his mouth**, words which flow from it: but to this end his speech should be conscientiously truthful, and intentionally useful. (21) **death .. tongue**, *see* Jas. iii. 5. [b] The tongue may be an agent in the greatest good or the greatest evil. **love it**, *i.e.* love free talking, but the proper use of the tongue may be included. "Cherish, cultivate, and carefully develop" a power that has such importance attaching to it.

The tongue (*v.* 21).—I. Look at the tongue as an instrument of the mind. 1. As the communicator of thought; 2. As a link of fellowship; 3. As the great agent in active life. II. Look at the tongue as influenced by will. 1. The flattering; 2. The lying; 3. The impure; 4. The malignant; 5. The proud; 6. The profane; 7. The cursing; 8. The blaspheming tongue. III. Look at the renewed and the sanctified tongue. 1. It is wise; 2. Wholesome; 3. Truthful; 4. Restrained; 5. Benevolent; 6. Devotional; 7. Praising tongue. Learn—(1) The tongue is the most difficult of management: (2) The most important; (3) The tongue of the sainted soul will glorify Him for ever. [c]—*The power of the tongue* (*v.* 21).—Look at the proverb in three applications. I. To the Christian in general. 1. He prays; 2. Confesses; 3. Converses with the tongue. II. To the preacher of the Gospel. 1. The tongue of a true Gospel minister produces life intentionally; 2. Or death incidentally. III. To the Saviour of men. This is true of Him as a—1. Teacher; 2. Advocate; 3. Judge. Learn—The awful responsibility attached to speech. [d]

A word in season.—The views of the Rev. Martin Boos, a late Catholic clergyman in Austria, though afterwards decidedly evangelical, were at the commencement of his ministry erroneous. About the year 1788 he went to visit a woman distinguished by her humility and piety, who was dangerously ill. In endeavouring to prepare her for death, he said to her, "I doubt not but you will die calm and happy." "Wherefore?" asked the sick woman. "Because your life has all been made up of a series of good works." The sick woman sighed: "If I die," said she, "confiding in the good works which you call to my recollection, I know for certain that I shall be condemned; but what renders me calm at this solemn hour is, that I trust solely in Jesus Christ my Saviour." "These few words," said Boos, "from the mouth of a dying woman, who was reputed a saint, opened my eyes for the first time. I learned what that was—'Christ for us.' Like Abraham, I saw His day. From that time I announced to others the Saviour of sinners whom I had myself

one fault of a well-deserving man shall meet with more reproaches than all his virtues praise,—such is the force of ill-will and ill-nature."—*Willis.*

c Roberts.

a Dav. Thomas, D.D.

"The general sense is plain; a man must for good or evil take the consequences of his words as well as of his deeds."—*Spk. Com.*

b Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.

"Let us guard this little member—the tongue—more than the pupil of the eye, and the more cautious we should be bec. we are of unclean lips."—*St. Chrysostom.*

Matt. xii. 36, 37.

c Dr. Burns.

d J. Sibree.

v. 21. *J. G. Dowling*, 255.

Young girls who have more vivacity than understanding will often make a sprightly figure in conversation. But this agreeable talent for entertaining others is frequently dangerous to themselves, nor is it by any means to be desired or encouraged very early in life Conversation should be the result of education,

not the precursor of it. It is a golden fruit, when suffered to grow gradually on the tree of knowledge; but if precipitated by forced and unnatural means, it will in the end become vapid in proportion as it is artificial.

e Whitecross.

f Young.

found, and there are many of them who rejoice in Him along with me."[e]

Conversation ventilates thought.—

Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up want air,
And spoil, like bales unopened to the sun—
Thought, too, delivered is the more possessed;
Teaching we learn, and giving we retain
The births of intellect; when dumb, forget.
Speech ventilates our intellectual fire;
Speech burnishes our mental magazine:
Brightens for ornament, and whets for use.
What numbers, sheathed in erudition, lie
Plunged to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And rusted in; who might have borne an edge,
And played a sprightly beam, if born to speech;
If born blest heirs of half their mother's tongue![f]

22. findeth a wife, plainly, one who is really a wife; *i.e.* a good wife;[a] a partner and head of the household, such as she should be, a wife who really stands by her husband's side as a "help meet for him."[b] favour .. Lord, who surely presides over such a blessing. To obtain a good wife is a sign that God delights in a man to do him good. Such a matter should be devoutly taken to God in prayer for wise guidance.

Treasure-trove (*v.* 22).—I. Many bad things are found without much seeking. II. Really good things must be carefully sought for if they would be found. III. This applies especially to a wife, *i.e.* a good wife. 1. Because all good things are counterfeited; 2. Because the goodness leads to retirement; 3. Because there may be other seekers, with sharper eyes and more perseverance; 4. But the find repays for the searching.

Countess Confalonieri.—I cannot refrain, says Sir William Jones, from giving one beautiful illustration of devoted duty and affection, in the instance of the Countess Confalonieri. The moment she heard that the count was condemned to death, she flew to Vienna; but the courier had already set out with the fatal mandate. It was midnight; but her agonies of mind pleaded for instant admission to the empress. The same passionate despair which won the attendants wrought its effect on their royal mistress. She hastened that moment to the emperor, and having succeeded, returned to the unhappy lady with a commutation of the sentence: her husband's life was spared. But the death-warrant was on its way. Could she overtake the courier? Throwing herself into a conveyance, and paying four times the amount for relays of horses, she never, it is stated, stopped or tasted food till she reached the city of Milan. The count was preparing to be led to the scaffold: but she was in time—she had saved him. During her painful journey she had rested her throbbing brow upon a small pillow, which she bathed with her tears, in the conflict of mingled terror and hope, lest all might be over. This interesting memorial of conjugal tenderness and truth in so fearful a moment, was sent by his judges to the count, to show their sense of his wife's admirable conduct.[c]

23. intreaties, not violence, wh. his position does not warrant. roughly, his wealth making him masterful.[a]

a "A good wife is heaven's last, best gift to a man; his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his casket of jewels. Her voice his sweetest music; her smiles his brightest day; her kiss the guardian of innocence; her arms the pale of his safety, the balm of his health, the balsam of his life; her industry his surest wealth, her economy his safest steward; her lips his faithful counsellors; her bosom the softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

b Ge. ii. 18, 20.

c. 22. *T. Gataker,* ii. 147.

c R. T. S.

a "Here, again, is a paradox. The

poor man, of whom one might expect roughness, supplicates; the rich, well-nurtured, from whom one might look for courtesy, answers harshly and roughly."—*Spk. Com.*

"It is a very foolish humour of some rich men—especially those who have risen from little—that they think their riches will warrant them to give hard words, and, even where they do not design any rough dealing, that it becomes them to answer roughly, whereas gentlemen ought to be gentle."—*Mat. Henry.*

Rough treatment of the poor (*v.* 23).—In answering the poor the rich should consider—I. That he himself may be one day poor. II. He should think of the circumstances that made the other poor. III. He should remember the humiliation of the poor suppliant. IV. He should reflect that the rough answer helps to create class-feeling. V. And that a kind answer turneth away wrath.

Kindness and confidence.—A rough-looking man brought his son into school, saying, "I have brought my boy here, and would like to see if you can do anything with him. I confess, he is more than I can manage. Of all the stubborn boys I know of, he is the worst." One day as the teacher was passing along by the desks, he laid his hand kindly on his shoulder; but the boy shuddered, and shrank from him. "What is the matter, Henry?" asked the teacher. "I thought you were going to strike me." "Why should I strike you?" "Because I am such a bad boy." "Who says you are a bad boy?" "Father says I am a bad boy, and mother says so, and every one says so." "But you are not a bad boy; at least I think so; and you can be as good a boy as any one. Ask God to help you to be good, and you will be sure to succeed." The poor boy's eyes filled with tears. He was not used to such kind words; and when his teacher left him he thought, "Can I be a good boy when every one says I'm so bad? But he did not say I was bad: he said I could be a good boy. I will be a good boy." From that time a marked change was observed in the boy. He took a great deal of interest in his studies, and made rapid progress. His schoolfellows soon learned to love him. He grew up to be a great and good man, and became governor of one of our largest States.[b]

1 Sa. xxv. 11, 12.

[b] *Child's Paper.*

24. man, *etc.*, the precise meaning of the original is not given in our version. A better rendering is, "A man of (many) friends will prove himself base, but there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." One who is a friend to everybody is of little worth to anybody.[a] there is a friend, One whose love is stronger and purer even than all ties of kindred.[b]

A faithful friend (*v.* 24).—I. Christ is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. II. The reasons why we may depend on Christ as being a faithful friend. 1. True friendship can only be between true men, whose hearts are the soul of honour; 2. Faithfulness to us in our faults is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend; 3. There are some things in His friendship which render us sure of not being deceived when we put our confidence in Him; 4. The friendship which will last does not take its rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there; 5. A friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend, nor is the friendship of ignorance desirable; 7. Friendship and love to be real must lie not in words but in deeds; 8. A purchased friend will never last long; 9. There cannot by any possibility arise any cause which could make Christ love us less. III. An inference to be derived from this. 1. If Christ sticks close, then our enemies will stick close also; 2. Is Christ your friend?"—*Friendship.*—I. There is such a thing as friendship and human affection. 1. God has implanted in our nature a social principle; 2. There are certain qualifications that give scope to this principle; 3. There have been some surprising instances of friend-

[a] "Solomon warns against a vainglorious passion of aspiring to a universal acquaintance, and an empty popularity, wh. will bring with it no support in adversity, but will ruin a man by pride and rashness, and prodigal expenditure."—*Wordsworth.*

"If you wish to gain affection, bestow it."—*Seneca.*

[b] "The brother and the friend are, through the goodness of God, with more or less of imperfection, often found among our fellows, but they are complete only in Him who is the fellow of the Almighty."—*Arnot.*

"Would you side with a false brother against a true friend? A brother may not be a friend; but a friend will always be a brother."—*Richardson.*

ship among men. II. The wisdom and goodness of Providence in thus ordering things. 1. It keeps society together; 2. Its exercise attended with pleasure; 3. It makes us in a humble degree like God; 4. It is suited to our state in both this world and the future. III. This friendship is imperfect. 1. Peculiarities of natural temper; 2. Clashing of interests; 3. Incapacity to help; 4. Want of religion; 5. Distance; 6. Short duration. Learn:—(1) Admire the goodness of God; (2) Cultivate friendship as a duty; (3) Let us not depend on human friendship.[d]

The best friend.—At one of the anniversaries in Paris a clergyman rose and related the case of a Socinian minister, who had read many books of controversy respecting the Divinity of Christ, and the kindred evangelical doctrines, but still remained a champion of Socinianism, living himself in darkness and sin. While in this frame of mind, he was presented with a little tract, entitled, *The Best Friend*, which simply told of Jesus; there was not one word of controversy in it; but he felt that this was just the Friend he needed. He laid the tract on the table, fell on his knees, and yielded up his heart to Jesus. "And now," said the clergyman, "I am that man." He is now one of the most devoted ministers in France.[e]

c C. H. Spurgeon.

d T. N. Toller.

v. 24. *J. Pierce*, 74; *Dr. J. Duchal*, i. 391; *Dr. W. Dodwell*, ii. 567; *C. Case*, 267; *J. P. Morgan*, ii. 83; *S. Lavington*, ii. 397; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 117; *J. Charlesworth*, i. 193.

e Whitecross.

Friends.—

But as our immortality
By inward sense we find,
Judging that if it could not be,
It would not be design'd:
So here how could such copies fall,
If there were no original?

But if truth be in ancient song,
Or story we believe;
If the inspired and greater throng
Have scorned to deceive;
There have been hearts whose friendship gave
Them thoughts at once both soft and grave.

Among that consecrated crew
Some more seraphic shade
Lend me a favourable clue,
Now mists my eyes invade.
Why, having fill'd the world with fame,
Left you so little of your flame?

Why is't so difficult to see
Two bodies and one mind?
And why are those who else agree
So difficultly kind?
Hath nature such fantastic art,
That she can vary every heart?

Why are the bands of friendship tied
With so remiss a knot,
That by the most it is defied,
And by the most forgot?
Why do we step with so light sense
From friendship to indifference?

"Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth our rugged pass to death; to break those bars of terror and abhorrence nature throws cross our obstructed way; and thus to make welcome, as safe, our port from every storm. Each friend snatch'd from us is a plume pluck'd from the wing of human vanity, which makes us stoop from our aërial heights, and, damp'd with omen of our own decease, on drooping pinions of ambition lower'd, just skim earth's surface, ere we break it up."—*Young.*

"Rare is true love; true friendship is still rarer."—*La Fontaine.*

If friendship sympathy impart,
Why this ill-shuffled game,
That heart can never meet with heart,
Or flame encounter flame?
What does this cruelty create?
Is't the intrigue of love or fate?

Had friendship ne'er been known to men
(The ghost at last confest)
The world had then a stranger been
To all that heaven possest.
But could it all be here acquired,
Not heaven itself would be desired.[f]

"The friendship of high and sanctified spirits loses nothing by death but its alloy; failings disappear, and the virtues of those whose 'faces we shall behold no more' appear greater and more sacred when beheld through the shades of the sepulchre."—*Robert Hall.*

f K. Philips.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **poor**, the word used means poor in circumstances. **integrity**, upright though humble. Character is ever of more value than any circumstances. **perverse**, *etc.*, the proud rich man who haughtily and scornfully misuses his lips. **fool**, the intentional opposite of humble innocence. (2) **without knowledge**,[a] or "Even the soul (*i.e.* life itself) without knowledge is not a blessing."[b] **hasteth**, *etc.*, does things inconsiderately and with precipitation. Rashness is the result of ignorance.[c]

The better man (*v.* 1).—I. He is a better man in himself. 1. He is a better character—contrast the principles, the worth of the two; 2. He has better enjoyments. II. He is a better man to others. 1. Relation; 2. Neighbour; 3. Citizen. Application:—A word to the pious poor: many things are better than wealth—intellect, knowledge, friendship, religion.[d]—*Divine knowledge most desirable* (*v.* 2).—Without it a man has no—I. Directory for his ways. II. Remedy for his sins. III. Support in his troubles. IV. Strength for his duties. V. Hope in his end. Apply:—Learn—1. To pity those who are in ignorance of the truth of Christ; 2. Improve the means of grace; 3. Make a good use of the knowledge you possess.[e]

Marvell's integrity.—The borough of Hull, in the reign of Charles II., chose Andrew Marvell, a young gentleman of little or no fortune, and maintained him in London for the service of the public. With a view to bribe him, his old schoolfellow, the Lord Treasurer Danby, went to him in his garret. At parting, the Lord Treasurer slipped into his hands an order upon the Treasury for £1,000, and then went into his chariot. Marvell, looking at the paper, called after the Treasurer, "My lord, I request another moment." They went up again to the garret, and Jack, the servant boy, was called. "Jack, what had I for dinner yesterday?" "Don't you remember, sir, you had the little shoulder of mutton that you offered me to bring from a woman in the market?" "Very right. What have I for dinner to-day?" "Don't you know, sir, that you made me lay up the bladebone to broil?" "'Tis so: very right. Go away." "My lord, do you hear that? Andrew Marvell's dinner is provided: there's your piece of paper, I want it not. I knew the sort of kindness you intended. I live here to serve my constituents. The ministry may seek men for their purpose; I am not one."[f]

"Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced; it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction. And, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget."—*Johnson.*

b Wordsworth.

c "Do nothing rashly. Stay a little, that you may make an end the sooner."—*Lord Bacon.*

"Things are not to be done by the effort of the moment, but by the preparation of past moments."—*Cecil.*

Is. xxvii. 11; Ho. iv. 6.

d Dr. Thomas.

e C. Simeon.

v. 2. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 33; *R. Hall*, i. 145; *D. Dickson*, 111; *J. Plumptre*, ii. 231; *Bp. Van Mildert*, i. 201; *Dr. Hook*, 158. *f Carwood*, i. 303.

f R. T. S.

3. foolishness, *etc.*, inconsiderate wilfulness. The foolishness wh. by perversity gets into difficultics, and then frets against God. perverteth, maketh slippery. so that the way is likely to throw the man down. fretteth, or rageth. Blames God for his own failures.[a]

Blaming the wrong party (*r.* 3).—I. By their folly men often pervert their own way through the world; by profligacy, intemperance, etc., they come to want. II. So reduced they often accuse Providence, or talk of ill-luck, etc. III. Men ought honestly to take the blame to themselves; that would be a step towards improving their lot.

Folly of fretfulness.—Two gardeners, who were neighbours, had their crops of early peas killed by frost; one of them came to condole with the other on this misfortune. "Ah!" cried he, "how unfortunate we have been, neighbour! do you know I have done nothing but fret ever since. But you seem to have a fine healthy crop coming up already: what are these?" "These!" cried the other gardener, "why, these are what I sowed immediately after my loss." "What! coming up already?" cried the fretter. "Yes; while you were fretting, I was working." "What! don't you fret when you have a loss?" "Yes: but I always put it off until after I have repaired the mischief." "Why, then you have no need to fret at all." "True," replied the industrious gardener; "and that's the very reason."[b]

4, 5. (4) wealth, *etc.*, see ch. xiv. 20. poor, here Heb. *dal*, the poor regarded as weak. separated, *etc.*, bec. his neighbour is afraid lest he may want something of him: so he shuns intercourse with him.[a] (5) false witness, *see* ch. xvii. 5.[b] unpunished, *Heb.* "held innocent." not escape, appropriate judgment.

The power of money (*r.* 4).—I. This is seen by its presence. It makes friends. 1. It is a question if such friends are worth the making, whose friendship depends on the balance at the banker's: 2. There is nothing said about the mode of getting the wealth, that is often a small matter so that one be rich. II. By its absence tends to separate the poor from their neighbours. 1. But what neighbours! 2. Yet is there some advantage in the fact stated; with this before them the poor are more likely to be industrious. Learn:—The folly and misery of making money the standard of respectability.

A legacy with a moral.—A more extraordinary legacy than that bequeathed to his fellow-citizens by Father la Loque cannot well be imagined. At his death his body was found stretched on a miserable bed in an attic of the Quartier de Grenelle, which is anything but a fashionable district of Paris. He was an old man, had lived in the simplest way, sustaining himself almost entirely on bread. His room contained hardly any furniture, yet hid in a corner was found a little cupboard with numerous shelves, and on these were sorted with the greatest order regiments of corks. In the centre was a manuscript written by the Père la Loque, on which he stated that he had formerly been in possession of considerable wealth, now squandered: that of all his greatness there remained but these corks, drawn in better times to welcome many a friend who now had forgotten him: that age and ruin had taught their moral, and that on each cork would be found written its history. This the old man did, hoping that it would

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a Is. xlv. 9.

v. 3. *S. Quincy*, 202; *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 190; *Dr. G. Gregory*, 47; *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 293; *Dr. W. Stevens*, ii. 175; *J. Milner*, ii. 193.

b Arvine.

"The rubbing of the eyes doth not fetch out the mote, but makes them more red and angry; no more doth the distraction and fretting of the mind discharge it of any ill humours, but rather makes them more abound to vex us."—*Bishop Patrick.*

a "Bec. men's consciences tell them they ought to relieve and succour such poor neighbours, they are willing to have the excuse that they did not see them."—*Mat. Henry.*

b "When Aristotle was asked what a man could gain by telling a falsehood, he replied, 'Never to be credited when he speaks the truth.'"—*Duc. Thomas, D.D.*

"The study of truth is perpetually joined with the love of virtue; for there is no virtue which derives not its original from truth, as, on the contrary, there is no vice which has not its beginning in a lie. Truth is the foundation of all knowledge, and the cement of all societies."—*Casuerba.*

serve as a timely warning, and that, placed on the shelves of some museum or of a philosopher's study, they might be found to illustrate human nature. On one of the corks was an inscription to this effect:—"Champagne cork; bottle emptied 12th of May, 1843, with M. B——, who wished to interest me in a business by which I was to make ten millions. This affair cost me 50,000 francs. M. B—— escaped to Belgium. A caution to amateurs." On another appears the following note:—"Cork of Cyprus wine, of a bottle emptied on the 4th of December, 1850, with a dozen fast friends. Of these I have not found a single one to help me on the day of my ruin."[c]

6, 7. (6) prince, or princely, liberal man. giveth gifts, the generous-handed. (7) brethren . . hate, bec. of his troublesome dependence on them. friends, contrasted with brothers, as in ch. xviii. 24. with words, of entreaty. "He craveth words of kindness from them."

The snare and the song (*v.* 6).—I. There is a snare for the wicked; in every sin there is a snare to the sinner, and through him to others. II. There is a song for the righteous, a new song; may be sung at all times: Paul and Silas singing in prison.[a]

Christ and the poor.—The highest circles of society and influence were open to Him, if He only desired to enter them. Still He adheres to the poor, and makes them the object of His ministry. And what is more peculiar, He has visibly an interest in their society, which is wanting in that of the higher classes, perceiving apparently that they have a certain aptitude for receiving right impressions which the others have not. They are not the wise and the prudent, filled with the conceit of learning and station, but they are the babes of poverty, open to conviction, prepared by their humble lot to receive thoughts and doctrines in advance of their age. Therefore He loves the poor, and without descending to their manners, He delights to be identified with them. He goes about on foot, teaching and healing them, occupying His great mind, for whole years, with details of labour and care—insanities, blind eyes, fevers, fluxes, leprosies, and sores. His patients are all below His level, and unable to repay Him, even by a breath of congenial sympathy, yet He appears to be supported by the consciousness of good which attends His labours.[b]—*Character of a friend.*—Concerning the man you call your friend—tell me, will he weep with you in the hour of distress? Will he faithfully reprove you to your face for actions for which others are ridiculing or censuring you behind your back? Will he dare to stand forth in your defence when detraction is secretly aiming its deadly weapons at your reputation? Will he acknowledge you with the same cordiality, and behave to you with the same friendly attention, in the company of your superiors in rank and fortune, as when the claims of pride or vanity do not interfere with those of friendship? If misfortune and losses should oblige you to retire into a walk of life in which you cannot appear with the same distinction, or entertain your friends with the same liberality as formerly, will he still think himself happy in your society, and, instead of gradually withdrawing himself from an unprofitable connection, take pleasure in professing himself your friend, and cheerfully assist you to support the burden of your afflictions? When sickness shall call you to retire from the gay and busy scenes of the world, will he

v. 5. *W. Reading*, iv. 269.

"There is nothing keeps longer than a middling fortune, and nothing melts away sooner than a great one. Poverty treads upon the heels of great and unexpected riches."—*La Bruyère.*

c *Once a Week.*

a *Dr. Thomas.*

"Want is the scorn of every wealthy fool, and wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule."—*Juvenal.*

Wine and good dinners make abundance of friends; but in the time of adversity not one is to be found.

b *Bushnell.*

"A long life may be passed without finding a friend in whose understanding and virtue we can equally confide, and whose opinion we can value at once for its justness and sincerity. A weak man, however honest, is not qualified to judge. A man of the world, however penetrating, is not fit to counsel. Friends are often chosen for similitude of manners, and therefore each palliates the other's failings because they are his own. Friends are tender, and unwilling to give pain; or they are interested, and fearful to offend."—*Johnson.*

He who cannot keep his own secret, is of all men the most unfit to be entrusted with the secrets of others.

c Enfield.

follow you into your gloomy retreat, listen with attention to your "tale of symptoms," and minister the balm of consolation to your fainting spirit? And lastly, when death shall burst asunder every earthly tie, will he shed a tear upon your grave, and lodge the dear remembrance of your mutual friendship in his heart, as a treasure never to be resigned? The man who will not do all this, may be your companion—your flatterer—your seducer—but, depend upon it, he is not your friend.[c]

v. 8. *Bp. Thomas,* i. 1.

"Let falsehood be a stranger to thy lips. Shame on the policy that first began to tamper with the heart, to hide its thoughts! And doubly shame on that inglorious tongue, that sold its honesty and told a lie!"—*Havard.*

"Real friendship is a slow grower, and never thrives unless engrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit."—*Chesterfield.*

"Let friendship creep gently to a height,—if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath."—*Fuller.*

a R. T. S.

8, 9. (8) wisdom, Heb. *heart;* implying the higher faculties of reason and feeling. loveth . . soul, wh. he shows by regarding his best interests. keepeth, which is often quite as difficult as the getting. (9) false witness, *comp. v.* 5.

The best proof of the highest self-love (*v.* 8).—I. Here is a character described: the man who loves his soul. 1. He remembers that he has a soul; 2. He seeks its cultivation as a thinking principle; 3. He seeks its salvation. II. Such a man will seek wisdom—1. As the proper food of the soul; 2. He will seek it earnestly, and at the right source; 3. He will seek for the wisdom that will make him wise to salvation.

A Norwegian farmer.—More than thirty years ago, a Norwegian farmer was, at the age of twenty-five, in the habit of making excursions from his father's dwelling for the purpose of distributing religious tracts, which he had caused to be printed at his own expense, and which he sold or gave away. The effects of his labours were perfectly astonishing, not less than 50,000 peasants dating the period of their conversion to sound and vital Christianity at the time when they first became known to that remarkable individual. To the sufferings which he had undergone it is most distressing to advert; he endured eleven several imprisonments, one of which lasted for a period of ten years. There is a passage towards the close of his journal, dated in the year 1814, from which it appears that a fine of a thousand rix-dollars was imposed upon him, and that all which he possessed on earth was sold for the liquidation of that debt: he might have escaped it, could he have prevailed on himself to petition the king, saying that he was unable to pay the amount; but such was his love of truth, that no consideration under heaven could induce him to declare a falsehood; and, in consequence, he suffered himself to be reduced to the lowest degree of poverty: he allowed everything which he possessed, down to the meanest utensil, to be sold, rather than declare that which he knew to be false.[a]

a Wordsworth.

b Spk. Com.

c O. Zöckler.

d Mat. Henry.

10, 11. (10) delight, a soft delicate life.[a] High unrestrained enjoyment.[b] Luxury.[c] Pleasure and liberty.[d] servant . . princes, ch. xxx. 22. This has often happened at the courts of Oriental despots. (11) discretion, or *prudence;* self-restraint,[e] ch. xiv. 29, xvi. 32. pass over transgression, in a spirit of merciful forgiveness.

"The fool is as incapable of properly using pleasure as knowledge."—*Fausset.*

e Plato said to his servant, "I would beat thee

Human glory (*v.* 11).—I. What does the world say? In what, according to its code, does the glory of man consist? II. What does the text say? Why does the glory of man consist in being forgiving? because it makes a man godlike: because it is a proof of the wisdom of one who knows he has much to be forgiven.

The mutinous seaman.—Another fact may be gleaned from the life of Sir James de Saumarez. When the mutiny at the Nore

broke out, the *Orion*, which he commanded, escaped it altogether, owing to the subordination of the men, and the attachment they felt for their worthy commander, with whom the greater part had served from the commencement of the war. It was from confidence in them, founded on accurate knowledge, that he consented to receive, in hope of his reformation, one of the worst of the mutineers, but an excellent seaman and ship-carpenter, who was to be tried for his life. Seasonable admonition and paternal attention to the man's feelings on the part of Sir James had, however, their desired effect. A few days after the rebel got on board, the signal was made for the boats of each ship to be manned and armed, to witness the execution of four criminals in one of the mutinous ships. Sir James, therefore, sent for him into the cabin, and after expostulating with him on the heinous crime he had committed, he assured him that he would spare him the anguish he must endure of beholding others suffer for an offence of which he had probably been the guilty cause. This was the last effort made to work a change in the mutineer, and the effect was complete. His rebellious spirit was subdued, he fell on his knees, bathed in tears, and blended the strongest protestations of loyalty to his king with the warmest expressions of attachment and gratitude to his commander. Nor were the feelings he displayed soon repressed. He was true to his word; his exertions were commensurate to his promises, and he who had been the most obdurate of rebels became one of the most faithful sailors Sir James Saumarez ever had.

12. king's wrath,[a] ch. xvi. 15, xx. 2, xxviii. 15. dew, ch. xvi. 15; Ps. lxxii. 6.

The Duke of Cumberland.—When the great Duke of Cumberland commanded in Germany, he was particularly pleased with the ability and valour of a sergeant belonging to his own regiment. Having observed the gallantry of this man, and made several inquiries into his private character, his royal highness took occasion, after a great exploit which the sergeant had performed, to give him a commission. Some time afterwards, he came to the duke, and entreated his leave to resign the rank which he held. Surprised at so extraordinary a request, the duke demanded the reason, and was told by the applicant that he was now separated from his old companions by his elevation, and not admitted into the company of his brother officers, who considered themselves degraded by his appointment. "Oh! is that the case?" said the duke; "let the matter rest for a day or two, and I will soon find means of putting an end to your disquietude." The next morning his royal highness went on the parade, when he was received by a circle of officers, and while he was engaged in conversation, he perceived his old friend walking at a distance by himself. On this the duke said, "Pray, gentlemen, what has that officer done that he should be drummed out of your councils?" and without waiting for an answer he went up, took the man by the arm, and thus accompanied, went through all the lines. When the parade was over, Lord Ligonier respectfully desired his royal highness to honour the mess with his presence that day. "With all my heart," replied the duke, "provided I bring my friend, here, with me." "I hope so," said his lordship; and from that day the gentleman's company was rather courted than shunned by the highest officer in the service.[b]

but that I am angry."

It is said of Julius Cæsar that, when provoked, he used to repeat the whole Roman alphabet before he suffered himself to speak.

v. 10. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 57.

"The noblest part of a friend is an honest boldness in the notifying of errors. He that tells me of a fault, aiming at my good, I must think him wise and faithful; wise, in spying that which I see not; faithful, in a plain admonishment, not tainted with flattery."—*Feltham.*

a "Anger is like ashes, wh. fly back in the face of him who throws them."—*Old Proverb.*

"The favour of my friend is as the refreshing dew." "The favours of that good man are continually dropping upon us." "He bathes me with his favours."—*Roberts.*

"Procure not friends in haste, and when thou hast a friend part not with him in haste."—*Solon.*

Distrust all who love you extremely upon a very slight acquaintance, and without any visible reason.

b R. T. S.

13, 14. (13) foolish son, *comp.* ch. x. 1, xv. 20, xvii. 21, 25. calamity,[a] a plural word, intimating the variety of troubles a foolish son may cause. continual dropping, wh. is a perpetual irritation, wearying out patience. (14) house . . fathers, such things as these men gather and leave to their children: but the better gift of the prudent wife comes directly from God.[b] The blessing is more directly and manifestly His bestowment.

A father's calamity (*v.* 11).—I. The son may have become foolish by—1. Parental indulgence; 2. The formation of evil habits; 3. Cultivation of bad companions. II. Such a son is the calamity of his father—1. Whose pride in him is destroyed; 2. Whose heart is filled with shame by the mention of his name.—*The husband's troubles.*—The contentions of a wife. I. They are often about small things. II. There is no escape from them. III. They produce one of the greatest miseries of home life. IV. They drive the husband to seek peace elsewhere.—*The prudent wife.*—I. Sketch her character. 1. Marked by economy; 2. Forethought; 3. Is jealous for her husband's honour; 4. Keeps his secrets; 5. Looks well to the ways of her household. II. Her origin,—from the Lord. Hence—1. She will be sought of the Lord; 2. Who will be thanked for the gift; 3. And glorified by the right use of it.

Self-control of Socrates.—Socrates finding himself in great emotion against a slave, said, "I would beat you if I were not angry." Having received a box on the ear, he contented himself by only saying, with a smile, "It is a pity we do not know when to put on a helmet." Socrates, meeting a gentleman of rank in the streets, saluted him, but the gentleman took no notice of it. His friends in company observing what passed, told the philosopher "they were so exasperated at the man's incivility, that they had a good mind to resent it." But he very calmly made answer, "If you meet any person in the road in a worse habit of body than yourself, would you think you had reason to be enraged at him on that account? Pray, then, what greater reason can you have for being incensed at a man for a worse habit of mind than any of yourselves?" His wife, Xantippe, was a woman of a most fantastical and furious spirit. At one time, having vented all the reproaches upon Socrates her fury could suggest, he went out and sat before the door. His calm and unconcerned behaviour but irritated her so much the more; and, in the excess of her rage, she ran upstairs and emptied a vessel upon his head, at which he only laughed, and said, "that so much thunder must needs produce a shower." Alcibiades, his friend, talking with him about his wife, told him he wondered how he could bear such an everlasting scold in the same house with him: he replied, "I have so accustomed myself to expect it, that it now offends me no more than the noise of carriages in the streets."[c]

15, 16. (15) slothfulness, *comp.* ch. vi. 9, 10. deep sleep, state of utter indifference. idle soul, *comp.* ch. x. 4, xii. 24, xx. 13. (16) keepeth, *etc.*, ch. x. 17, xiii. 13. despiseth his ways, and so treats his moral conduct as of no importance.[a]

Ability to labour.—Where ability to labour is, there Providence meets action and crowns it. He that forbids to cark for to-morrow, denies bread to the idleness of to-day. Consider, O my

[a] Stroke upon stroke.

"The scolding words of the bad wife are, as it were, the single drops of the steady rain, as her perpetual temper pours itself out."—*O. Zöckler.*

[b] Pr. xviii. 22.

v. 14. *T. Gataker,* ii. 135.

"I too acknowledge the all but omnipotence of early culture and nurture; hereby we have either a doddered dwarf bush, or a high-towering, wide-shadowing tree! either a sick yellow cabbage, or an edible luxuriant green one. Of a truth, it is the duty of all men, especially of all philosophers, to note down with accuracy the characteristic circumstances of their education,—what furthered, what hindered, what in any way modified it."—*Carlyle.*

"Were it not better for a man in a fair room to set up one great light, or branching candlestick of lights, than to go about with a rushlight into every dark corner?"—*Bacon.*

[c] *Cheever.*

[a] Ps cxix. 9.

v. 16 *M Henry,* 519.

"The resting-day of Christians, and festivals of the Church, must in no sense be days of idleness; for

soul, thy own delinquency, and let employment make thee capable of thy God's protection. The bird that sits is a fair mark for the fowler; while they that use the wing escape the danger. Follow thy calling, and Heaven will follow thee with His blessing. What thou hast formerly omitted, present repentance may redeem; and what judgments God hath threatened, early petitions may avert.[b]

17. pity . . poor, wh. may find expression in other ways than by giving moneys. lendeth, so that he may certainly look for return and payment:[a] though this must not be made the motive of his charity.

The Lord was their banker.—Mr. Philip Henry, one of the Nonconformist ministers, when silenced from preaching by the Act of Uniformity, took comfort himself, and administered comfort to others, from the passage, "Let Mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab." "God's people," he observed, "may be an outcast people—cast out of men's love, their synagogues, their country; but God will own His people when men cast them out; they are outcasts, but they are His, and some way or other He will provide a dwelling for them." Shortly before his death, the same pious man observed that, though many of the ejected ministers were brought very low, had many children, were greatly harassed by persecution, and their friends generally poor and unable to support them, yet, in all his acquaintance, he never knew nor could remember to have heard of any Nonconformist minister in prison for debt.[b]—*Objects of charity.*—Nothing seems much clearer than the natural direction of charity. Would we all but relieve, according to the measure of our means, those objects immediately within the range of our personal knowledge, how much of the worst evil of poverty might be alleviated! Very poor people, who are known to us to have been honest, decent, and industrious, when industry was in their power, have a claim on us, founded on our knowledge, and on vicinity and neighbourhood, which have in themselves something sacred and endearing to every good heart. One cannot, surely, always pass by in his walks for health, restoration, or delight, the lone wayside beggar, without occasionally giving him an alms. Old, careworn, pale, drooping, and emaciated creatures, who pass us by without looking beseechingly at us, or even lifting up their eyes from the ground, cannot often be met with, without exciting an interest in us for their silent and unobtrusive sufferings or privations. A hovel, here and there, around and about our own comfortable dwelling, attracts our eyes by some peculiar appearance of penury, and we look in, now and then, upon its inmates, cheering their cold gloom with some small benefaction. These are duties all men owe to distress; they are easily discharged; and even such tender mercies as these are twice blessed.[c]

Mrs. Fry at Newgate prison.—

The harsh key grated in its ward,
The massy bolts undrew,
And watchful men of aspect stern,
Gave us admittance through—
Admittance where so many pine
The far release to gain.
Where desperate hands have madly striven
To wrest the bars in vain.

a Comp. Mat. xxv. 40. "God is pleased with no music below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons. This part of our communication does the work of God and our neighbours, and bears us to heaven in streams made by the overflowing of our brothers' comfort."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

b Arvine.

"That charity alone endures which flows from a sense of duty and a hope in God. This is the charity that treads in secret those paths of misery from which all but the lowest of human wretches have fled; this is that charity which no labour can weary, no ingratitude detach, no horror disgust; that toils, that pardons, that suffers; that is seen by no man and honoured by no man; but, like the great laws of nature, does the work of God in silence, and looks to a future and better world for it is better to plough upon holy-days than to do nothing, or to do viciously; but let them be spent in the works of the day, that is, of religion and charity, according to the rules appointed."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

b Quarles.

its reward."—*Sydney Smith.*

c Chalmers.

"The secret that doth make a flower a flower so frames it that to bloom is to be sweet, and to receive to give. No soil so sterile, and no living lot so poor, but it hath somewhat still to spare in bounteous odours. Charitable they who, be their having more or less, so have that less is more than need, and more is less than the great heart's good-will."—*Dobell.*

"In all other human gifts and passions, though they advance nature, yet they are subject to excess. But charity alone admits no excess. For so we see, by aspiring to be like God in power, the angels transgressed and fell; by aspiring to be like God in knowledge man transgressed and fell; but by aspiring to be like God in goodness or love, neither man nor angel ever did, or shall transgress. For unto that imitation we are called."—*Lord Bacon.*

"Charity itself commands us, where we know no ill, to think well of all. But friendship, that always goes a pitch higher, gives a man a peculiar right and claim to the good opinion of his friend."—*South.*

What untold depths of human woe
Have roll'd their floods along
Since first these rugged walls were heaved
From their foundations strong!
Guilt, with its seared and blacken'd breast,
Fierce Hate, with sullen glare,
And Justice, smiting unto death,
And desolate Despair.

Here Crime hath spread a loathsome snare
For souls of lighter stain,
And Shame hath cower'd, and Anguish drain'd
The darkest dregs of pain.
And Punishment its doom hath dealt,
Relentless as the grave,
And spurn'd the sinful fellow-worm,
Whom Jesus died to save.

Yet be not strict their faults to mark,
Nor hasty to condemn,
Oh, thou, whose erring human heart
May not have swerved like them;
But, with the tear-drop on thy cheek,
Adore that guardian Power
Who held thee on the slippery steep
Amid the trial-hour.

Who entereth to his dreary cell?
Who dares the harden'd throng,
With fearless step and brow serene,
In simple goodness strong?
She hath a Bible in her hand,
And on her lips the spell
Of loving and melodious speech,
Those lion-hearts to quell.

She readeth from that holy book,
And in its spirit meek
Doth warn them as those straying ones
Whom Christ vouchsafes to seek;
She kneeleth down and asketh Him
Who deign'd the lost to find,
Back to His blessed fold to lead
These impotent and blind.

Oh, beautiful! though not with youth,
Bright locks of sunny ray,
Or changeful charms that years may blot,
And sickness melt away:
But with sweet lowliness of soul,
The love that never dies,
The purity and truth that hold
Communion with the skies.

Oh, beautiful! yet not with gauds,
That strike the worldling's eye,
But in the self-denying toils
Of heaven-born charity.

Press onward, till thou find thy home
In realms of perfect peace,
Where, in the plaudit of thy Lord,
All earthly cares shall cease.[d]

d Sigourney.

18, 19. (18) **chasten**, *etc.*, ch. xiii. 24, xxxiii. 13. **spare . . crying**, should be rend. "Do not set thy soul on his destruction." It is a caution to passionate parents against angry resentments, and undue chastisements.[a] (19) **great wrath**, who by unrestrained temper is led to do foolish and violent things. **do it again**, such a man will get into trouble over and over again.

a Rucetschi thinks the caution is not against excess f severity, but against the cruel kindness that kills by withholding seasonable correction.

Paternal firmness and discipline.—"A gentleman," says Mr. Abbot, "sitting by his fireside one evening, with his family around him, took the spelling-book, and called upon one of his little sons to come and read. John was about four years old. He knew all the letters of the alphabet perfectly, but happened at that moment to be in rather a sullen humour, and was not at all disposed to gratify his father. Very reluctantly he came as he was bid; but when his father pointed to the first letter of the alphabet, and said, 'What letter is that, John?' he could get no answer. John looked upon the book, sulky and silent. 'My son,' said the father pleasantly, 'you know the letter A.' 'I cannot say A,' said John. 'You must,' said the father, in a serious and decided tone. 'What letter is that?' John refused to answer. The contest was now fairly commenced. John was wilful, and determined that he would not read. His father knew that it would be ruinous to his son to allow him to conquer. He felt that he must, at all hazards, subdue him. He took him into another room, and punished him. He then returned, and again showed John the letter. But John still refused to name it. The father again retired with his son, and punished him more severely. But it was unavailing. The stubborn child still refused to name the letter, and, when told that it was A, declared that he could not say A. Again the father inflicted punishment as severely as he dared to do it, and still the child, with his whole frame in agitation, refused to yield. The father was suffering from most intense solicitude. He regretted exceedingly that he had been drawn into the contest. He had already punished his child with a severity which he feared to exceed, and yet the wilful sufferer stood before him sobbing and trembling, but apparently as unyielding as a rock. I have often heard that parent mention the acuteness of his feelings at that moment. His heart was bleeding at the pain which he had been compelled to inflict upon his son. He knew that question was now to be settled—who should be master? and after his son had withstood so long and so much he greatly feared the result. The mother sat by, suffering, of course, most acutely, but perfectly satisfied that it was their duty to subdue the child, and that in such a trying hour a mother's feelings must not interfere. With a heavy heart the father again took the hand of his son to lead him out of the room for farther punishment; but to his inconceivable joy, the child shrunk from enduring any more suffering, and cried, "Father, I'll tell the letter." The father, with feelings not easily conceived, took the book and pointed to the letter. 'A,' said John, distinctly and fully. 'And what is that?' said the father, pointing to the next letter. 'B,' said John, etc.

v. 18. *S. R. Hall*, 77.

"The first object of education is to train up an immortal soul. The second (but second at an immeasurable distance) is, to do this in a manner most conducive to human happiness; never sacrificing either the interests of the future world to those of the present, or the welfare of the man to the inclinations of the child; errors not dissimilar in complexion, though so awfully different in the importance of their results."—*Mrs. Trench.*

"A gentleman while attending an examination of a school where every question was answered with the greatest promptness, put some questions to the pupils which were not exactly the same as found in the book. After numerous ready answers to their teachers on the subject of geography, he asked one of the pupils where Turkey was. She answered, rather hesitatingly, 'In the yard, with the poultry.'"—*Miss Edgeworth.*

The rest of the children were sitting by, and they saw the contest, and they saw where was the victory; and John learned a lesson which he never forgot; he learned never again to wage such an unequal warfare; he learned that it was the safest and happiest course for him to obey."

20—22. (20) hear counsel, such as a father gives, who wisely corrects and chastises. latter end, as addressed to youth this may mean the later and responsible time of life. It need not refer to death-time. (21) many devices, plans and schemes. The purposes of many are very various, and ever changing. counsel . . stand, it is well for us that a Divine overruling should arrange and modify our plans. (22) desire, or wish; this may be taken into gracious account, though he may be unable to carry his wish into act. liar, prob. the rich man who makes excuses for not giving.

Devices (*v.* 21).—I. The devices of men's hearts. The heart a world, full of schemes, always devising. What a scene if they could all be brought to light! II. The vanity of them. What a world if they could be all fulfilled! III. The counsel of the Lord frustrating, controlling, overruling these devices. Learn—1. How vain are the attempts to oppose the counsel of God; 2. How foolish the idea that as knowledge comes into the world religion will go out; 3. How easy for God to overturn all wicked devices; 4. What a revelation will there be, at the last day, of devices.[a]

A poor man is better than a liar.—"Many years ago," says one, "I was witness to a very interesting scene at the house of a friend at Walworth, on a Sunday evening. A sermon had been preached in the morning, of which previous notice had been given, particularly addressed to poor children; and the master of the family had taken his own children to hear the discourse, having promised to distribute rewards amongst them, according to the proficiency with which they should repeat the text and state the heads and points of the sermon. As I entered the parlour I was struck with the silent employment of the children, who were engaged in preparing themselves for their task; and after tea they were called up in order. At this distance of time, I remember only two circumstances connected with the result. One is, that the memories of the female children, in general, seemed better, and the facility of imparting their ideas greater, than those of the male branches of the family. The other relates to the youngest of the children, a little boy, who, though not expected to say anything, requested to be heard. The text was too long for him to remember, but he delighted us all by the simple account which he gave of the sermon, in the following words: 'I heard the gentleman (the minister) say, it was no disgrace to be poor, but it was a disgrace to tell lies.'"[b]—*Truth-speaking good policy.*—The Duke of Ossuna, viceroy of Naples, passing through Barcelona, went on board the Cape Galley, and passing through the crew of slaves, he asked several of them what their offences were. Every one excused himself upon various pretences: one said he was put in out of malice, another by bribery of the judge; but nearly all of them unjustly. The duke came at last to a sturdy little black man, whom he questioned as to what he was there for. "My lord," said he, "I cannot deny that I am justly put in here; for I wanted money, and so took a purse near

a Penny Pulpit.

v. 20. *J. Milner*, 82.

v. 21. *Dr. T. Horton*, 249; *Bp. Sanderson*, 653; *J. Foster*, ii. 300; *J. W. Wickes*, 325; *Dr. J. Dupree*, ii. 176; *A. Alison*, i. 69.

v. 22. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 59.

"Truth, the mother of Virtue, is painted in garments as white as snow. Her looks are serene, pleasant, courteous, cheerful, and yet modest; she is the pledge of all honesty, the bulwark of honour, the light and joy of human society. She is commonly accounted the daughter of Time or Saturn, because Truth is discovered in the course of time: but Democritus feigns that she lies hid in the bottom of a well."—*Andrew Tooke.*

b Whitecross.

"Lying is a disgraceful vice, and one that Plutarch paints in most disgraceful colours, when he says that it is 'affording testimony that one first despises God, and then fears men.' It is not possible more happily to describe its horrible, disgusting, and abandoned nature; for can we imagine anything more vile than to be cow-

Tarragon, to keep me from starving." The duke, on hearing this, gave him two or three blows on the shoulder with his stick, saying, "You rogue, what are you doing among honest innocent men? get you out of their company." The poor fellow was then set at liberty, while the rest were left to tug at the oar.[c]

23, 24. (23) abide, better read clause. He that is filled with it (the fear of the Lord) shall pass the night, and not be visited with evil. (24) hideth his hand, reference is to the dish into wh. each person put his hand. The man is so lazy he will not raise his hand to feed himself.[a] Comp. ch. xxvi. 15.

John Bunyan. — Bunyan, with irresistible zeal, preached throughout the country, especially in Bedfordshire and its neighbourhood; until, on the restoration of Charles II., he was thrown into prison, where he remained twelve years. During his confinement he preached to all to whom he could gain access; and when liberty was offered to him, on condition of promising to abstain from preaching, he constantly replied, "If you let me out to-day, I shall preach again to-morrow."[b]

25. smite, give corporal punishment to. scorner, ch. xiii. 1. Such a man is regarded as irreclaimable. "It is a character made up of pride, irreverence, and cruelty." simple, conceived as ready to learn. reprove, *etc.*, if there be any right disposition reproof becomes valuable moral discipline.[a]

Mr. S——.—"There is one thing," said Mr. S., a professed infidel, to one of his companions in sin, "which mars all the pleasures of my life." "Ah," replied his companion, "what is that?" "Why, I am afraid the Bible is true. If I could but certainly know that death is an eternal sleep, I should be happy: my joy would be complete. But here is the thorn that stings me! This is the sword that pierces my very soul. If the Bible be true, I am lost for ever. Every prospect is gone, and I am lost for ever!" This unhappy man soon afterwards undertook a voyage, was shipwrecked, and drowned.[b]

26, 27. (26) wasteth, wasting his property by riotous living; and his spirit by unfilial conduct.[a] chaseth away, driveth her away, refusing her persuasions and entreaties. (27) cease, *etc.*, good warning for Rehoboam, and all sons in like peril.

Examples of prodigality.—Lucullus, the Roman general, though justly admired for his bravery, justice, and clemency, yet is deservedly censured for his extravagance and prodigality. Cicero and Pompey, meeting him one day in the city, told him they intended doing themselves the pleasure of supping with him that night; "but it shall be upon this condition," added they, "that you have nothing extraordinary on our account." To this he seemingly agreed; but guess their surprise, when they sat down to an entertainment that cost no less than fifty thousand crowns! What astonished them more was the shortness of the time in which it was prepared; but this it seems was little more than his ordinary diet. This superfluous pomp and magnificence will not be thought incredible if we compare it with that of Peter du Ruere after he was made cardinal by the pope, his kinsman: for within the space of two years which he lived at Rome he expended in feasts and entertainments no less than four hundred thousand crowns. Mulcasses, King of Thunes

ards with regard to men, and brave with regard to God?"—*Montaigne.*

c R. T. S.

a "The scene brought before us is that of an Eastern feast. There are no knives, forks, or spoons. Every guest has to help himself or be helped by the host."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 24. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 67.

b R. T. S.

a "Therefore God smites some that He may warn all."—*Bp. Hall.*

v. 25. *T. Atterbury*, 81; *R. Fiddes*, ii. 52.

"His brain is as dry as the remainder-biscuit after a voyage."—*Shakespeare.*

b R. T. S.

a De. xxi. 18, 21; Ps. xvii. 21–25, xx. 20.

v. 27. *T. Cole*, 67; *Bp. Sherlock*, ii. 153; *Dr. W. Leechman*, ii. 129; *Dr. A. Rees*, iii. 41; *J. J. Conybeare*, *Bamp. Lec.* 249.

"We never find the Scripture commending any prodigal but one, and him, too, only for his ceasing to be so. Whose courses, if we reflect upon, we shall see his prodigality bringing him from his revelling companions and his riotous meats, to tie swine and to

the trough; and from imitating their sensuality, by a natural consequence to take up with their diet too."—*Dr. South.*

b L. M. Stretch.

was so complete an epicure that, being expelled his kingdom for his infamous debaucheries, and hearing afterwards that Charles V. was inclined to reinstate him on the throne, he ordered a peacock to be dressed for his supper, and spen a hundred crowns on the sauce. The Emperor Vitellius was likewise so shamefully fond of superfluity and excess, that for one single meal he has ordered two thousand different kinds of fish, and seven thousand fowls. Without doubt these epicures agreed with the poet Philoxenus, who wished that he had a crane's neck, that he might the longer enjoy the pleasure of eating and drinking.[b]

23, 29. (28) **ungodly witness,** *Heb.* a witness of Belial. One who is false by bad principles. **scorneth,**[a] by boldly uttering his lies. **iniquity,** better, *mischief.* It is a real enjoyment to him to produce calamity. He swallows it as if it were sweet fruit. As a dainty, he seizes it and lives on it. (29) **prepared,** and therefore sure to come eventually upon such. Their punishment is sure, fixed, and ready.

Voltaire.—Voltaire spent his whole life in malignant but vain attempts to ridicule and overturn Christianity. He was the idol of a large portion of the French nation: but just when they were decreeing new honours for him, and loading him with applause, the hour of his ignominy and shame arrived. In a moment, the approach of death dissipated his delusive dreams and filled his soul with inexpressible horror. Conscience started from her long slumbers, and unfolded before him the extended roll of his crimes. Whither could he flee for relief? Fury and despair succeeded each other by turns, and he had more the appearance of a demon than a man. To his physician he said, "Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life." The doctor answered, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire replied, "Then I shall go to hell, and you shall go with me;" and soon after expired.[b]

a Scorners are fools. Those that ridicule things sacred and serious do but make themselves ridiculous.

Pr. x. 13; He. x. 31.

"How many are great talkers? or great orators? if that sounds better. We have the art of saying much *on* a little; whereas we most want the art of saying much *in* a little."—*Pavillon.*

b R. T. S.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1. **wine,**[a] personified here, represented as a sort of evil demon, wh. excites to frivolous wantonness, or to wild and boisterous action. It is evident fr. this that some Scripture wine was intoxicating. **mocker,** or scorner. That is. it is apt to make men such. **strong drink,** poss. palm wine of Syria: spiced wine;[b] or spirit taken from mead. **raging,** makes the man boisterous.[c] **deceived,** *lit.* erring, reeling. **not wise,** for "it injures the health, enfeebles the intellect, deadens the moral sensibilities, destroys reputation, impoverishes the exchequer, disturbs friendship, breeds quarrels, and brings misery."

The intemperate use of strong drink (*v.* 1).—I. The intemperate use of strong drink is deceitful; it deceives others as to its advantages. 1. That it strengthens the system is deceptive; 2. And that it enriches the national revenue. II. The intemperate use of strong drinks is enraging. III. The intemperate use of strong drinks is foolish.[d]

Loss of the Neptune.—This ship, carrying thirty-six men, sailed from Aberdeen on a fine morning in May, with the fairest prospect of good weather, and a prosperous voyage. About eleven o'clock the wind arose from the east, and swept over the sea with

a "Alcoholic drink is the great false prophet of England, — a prophet, working busily in every district, under the inspiration of hell."—*David Thomas, D.D.*
"There is no sin which doth more deface God's image than drunkenness; it disguiseth a person, and doth even unman. Drunkenness gives him the throat of a fish, and the belly of a swine, and the heart of an ass. Drunkenness is the shame of

overwhelming violence. In about an hour she was seen standing in, but under such a press of sail as, considering the gale, astonished all on shore. But on she came, now bounding on the top of the sea, and then almost engulfed in the foaming cavern. The harbour of Aberdeen is exposed to the east, and formed by a pier on one side, and a breakwater on the other, and so narrow at the entrance as not to admit two large ships abreast. All saw that something was wrong on board. One attempt was made to shorten sail, but the ship was then within a cable's length of the shore, and urged on with an impetuosity which no human power could withstand. The wives and families of the men who were thus hastening to death had assembled near the pier: but all stood in silent horror, broke in a moment by the cry, "She's lost!" as the vessel, lashed on by the tempest, passed to the outer side of the breakwater, and struck with awful violence between two black rugged rocks. The cries of the victims were most horrible. The dreadful crisis had come, and they were lost indeed. A few brave men on shore endeavoured to man the lifeboat, and take it round the breakwater but it was unavailing. One heavy sea rolling over the wreck for a moment concealed her, and when the people looked again she was gone! Her crew and timbers were hurled against the rocks, and with the exception of one man, who was washed up and lodged on a projecting edge, none escaped of the thirty-six who had that morning left the shore in health and spirits. From the man who was saved, the melancholy truth was learnt that the crew were all intoxicated and could not manage the vessel.[e]

2, 3. (2) fear, *etc.*,[a] ch. xix. 12. sinneth . soul,[b] by bringing down his wrath upon them; and the Eastern king had full control over property and life. (3) cease from strife, or, to dwell without strife: intimating a peaceful and peaceable habit of life.[c] meddling, *lit.* rolls, or rushes forward (ch. xvii. 14): interfering in everybody's quarrel.[d] "An officious interference with the business of others, a prying into their concerns, creates discord."

How to avoid quarrels.—The fox and his cub.—A young fox asked his father if he could not teach him some trick to defeat the dogs, if he should fall in with them. The father had grown grey in a long life of depredation and danger, and his scars bore witness to his narrow escapes in the chase, or his less honourable encounters with the faithful guardians of the hen-roost. He replied with a sigh, "After all my experience, I am forced to confess that the best trick is, to keep out of their way."—*Evils of scandal.*—

Nor do they trust their tongues alone,
But speak a language of their own;
Can read a nod, a shrug, a look,
Far better than a printed book,
Convey a libel in a frown,
And wink a reputation down;
Or, by the tossing of the fan,
Describe the lady and the man.[e]

A whisper broke the air.—
A soft light tone, and low,
Yet barb'd with shame and woe;
Now, might it only perish there,

nature, the extinguisher of reason, the shipwreck of chastity, and the murderer of conscience."—*Divine of* 1662.

b Is. v. 11, 22.

c "When the wine is in the wit is out, and then the man, according as his natural temper is, either mocks like a fool, or rages like a madman."—*Mat Henry.*

Pr. xxiii. 29, 30; Ho. iv. 11; Lu. xxi. 34; Eph. v. 18.

r. 1. *D. Lamont*, i. 229; *T. St. John*, 273.

d Dr. Thomas.

e Cheever.

a "Sol.'s object in this counsel is to deter his son from incurring his royal displeasure by libertinism and intemperance."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ha. ii. 10.

c "Let it pass for a kind of sheepishness to be meek. It is a likeness to Him that was as a sheep before His shearers, not opening His mouth; it is a portion of His spirit."—*Arch. Leighton.*

d The man who combats himself will be happier than he who contends with others.

"The busybody's estate is too narrow for his mind, and therefore he is fain to make himself room in others' affairs; yet ever in pretence of love..... His

tongue, like the tail of Samson's foxes, carries firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world on a flame." — *Bp. Hall.*

e Swift.

f L. E. Landon.

Nor further go!
Ah, me! a quick and eager ear
Caught up the little meaning sound!
Another voice has breathed it clear,
And so it wander'd round
From ear to lip, from lip to ear,
Until it reach'd a gentle heart,
And that—it broke![f]

4. **sluggard**,[a] ch. x. 4, one utterly indisposed to work, ready to find any excuse. **cold**, ploughing in Palestine is in Nov. and Dec., when the wind blows commonly from the north. Such a time is too rough and disagreeable for him, so he lets the opportunity pass.[b] **beg**, or desire; look for his share in the harvest-time.

Laborious idleness.—There is such a thing as laborious idleness. Busy? So was the shepherd on the Alps, mentioned by Dugald Stewart, who spent fifteen years of life learning to balance a pole on his chin; and the philosopher sagely remarks how much good, had they been directed to a noble object, this diligence and perseverance would have accomplished. Busy? So have I seen the miller's wheel, which went round and round; but idly, grinding no corn. Busy? So, in a way, was the Russian who, facing the winter's cold nor regarding the cost of massive slabs brought at great labour from frozen lake or river, built him an icy palace, within whose glittering translucent walls, wrapt in furs and shining in jewels, rank and beauty held their revelry, and the bowl and the laugh and the song went round. But with soft breath, and other music, and opening buds, spring returned; and then, before the eyes that had gazed with wonder on the crystal walls of that fairy palace as they gleamed by night with a thousand lights, or flashed with the radiance of gems in the bright sunshine, it dissolved, nor left "a wrack behind"—its pleasures, "vanity;" its expense, "vexation of spirit." Busy? So, in a way, are the children who when the tide is at the ebb, with merry laughter and rosy cheeks and nimble hands build a castle of the moist sea-sand—the thoughtless urchins, types of lovers of pleasure and of the world, so intent on their work as not to see how the treacherous, silent tide has crept around them, not merely to sap and undermine, and with one rude blow of her billow demolish the work of their hands, but to cut off their retreat to the distant shore, and drown their frantic screams and cries for help in the roar of its remorseless waves. From a death-bed where all he toiled and sinned and sorrowed for is slipping from his grasp, fading from his view, such will his life seem to the busiest worldling; he spends his strength for nought, and his labour for that which profiteth not. With an eye that pities because it foresees our miserable doom, God calls us from such busy trifling, from a life of laborious idleness to a service which is as pleasant as it is profitable, as graceful as it is dutiful, saying, Work out your salvation—"Work while it is called to-day, seeing that the night cometh when no man can work."[c]

5, 6. (5) **in the heart**, a purpose cherished, but unuttered.[a] The fig. is of deep well. **draw it out**, by his skill in questioning and leading on; draws as one draws water with a bucket, laboriously, from a deep place. (6) **proclaim . . goodness**.

[a] Pr. vi. 6.

[b] "Our farmers do actually plough in the severest weather. I have often seen them shivering with cold, and contending with wind and rain, quite enough to discourage those who are not sluggards. This hard necessity of winter work is mainly owing to the wretched implements used, and to a strange deficiency in agricultural science and skill. These men, with their frail ploughs and tiny oxen, must wait until the ground is saturated and softened, however late in the season that may be."—*Thomson.*

"Margin, winter. They begin to plough about the latter end of September, and sow their earliest wheat about the middle of October. The frosts are never severe enough to prevent their ploughing all the winter."—*Burder.*

c Dr. Guthrie.

[a] "Some are very able and fit to give counsel, have an excellent

being always ready to talk about themselves: to "blow their own trumpets." The goodness here is bounty, liberality. **faithful man**,[b] with sufficient knowledge of himself to keep him silent and humble. A man of fidelity.

Self-praise (*v.* 6).—I. Here is expressed the commonness of self-applause; see it in nations, in churches, in persons. 1. The profane; 2. The Pharisee; 3. The orthodox; 4. The godly. II. The rareness of self-consistency. A man faithful—1. In his civil concerns; 2. Friendly connections; 3. To his trusts; 4. To his convictions; 5. To his religious professions. Apply:—(1) Let Christians be thankful that they are not under the law, but under grace; (2) Seek after the influence of Divine grace; (3) Be diffident and humble.[c]—*True piety is rare* (*v.* 6).—This observation we shall confirm by showing—I. That a profession of goodness is common—1. Of the profane; 2. Of the moral; 3. Of the unsound professor. But it must be confessed—II. That a life suited to this profession is very rare. Who then is faithful—1. To his principles? 2. To his promises? 3. To his convictions? Learn—(1) To be zealous over ourselves; (2) To seek the influences of God's grace.[d]

Humility.—Wise men know their own ignorance, and are ever ready to learn. Humility is the child of knowledge. Michael Angelo was found by the Cardinal Farnese walking in solitude amid the ruins of the Coliseum, and when he expressed his surprise the great artist answered, "I go yet to school that I may continue to learn." Who among us can after this talk of finishing our education? We have need to learn of all around us. He must be very foolish who cannot tell us something: or more likely we must be more foolish not to be able to learn of him.[e]

faculty of cleaving a hair, hitting the joint of a difficulty, and advising pertinently; but they are modest and reserved, and not communicative; they have a great deal in them, but it is loth to come out."—*Mat. Henry.*

Mat. vi. 2, 5, 16; Lu. xvi. 15.

b "Men boast of their liberality, and we look in vain for the fulfilment of actual obligations."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 6. *Dr. J. Erskine*, ii. 127.

c W. Jay.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Spurgeon.

7, 8. (7) **just man**, one who is true before God, and upright in all dealings with his fellow-man. **walketh**, usual fig. for conducteth[a] his life. **children are blessed**,[a] by his inspiring influence and example. (8) **king**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xiv. 35, xvi. 10, 15. **scattereth**,[b] or winnoweth it away as easily as chaff from the threshing-floor. **with his eyes**, as he sits on his throne he thus expresses his indignation.[c]

Henry V. and the judge.—One of the favourites of King Henry V., when Prince of Wales, having been indicted for some misdemeanour, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest he could make in his favour; and the Prince was so incensed at the issue of the trial that he struck the judge on the bench. This magistrate, whose name was Sir William Gascoign, acted with a spirit becoming his character. He instantly ordered the Prince to be committed to prison; and young Henry, sensible by this time of the insult he had offered to the laws of his country, suffered himself to be quietly conducted to jail by the officers of justice. The king, Henry IV., who was an excellent judge of mankind, was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he cried out in a transport of joy, "Happy is the king who has a magistrate possessed of courage to execute the laws; and still more happy in having a son who will submit to such chastisement."[d]

a Pr. xiv. 26.

b Fr. verb, to **sift**, to winnow.

c Ps. xi. 4; Mat. iii. 12.

v. 7. *Dr. Paley*, i. 241.

v. 8. *Bp. M. Smith*, 215; *R. Nares*, 214; *Bp. Kaye*, 63.

d Cheever.

"God gives manhood but one clue to success—utter and exact justice; that He guarantees shall be always expediency."—*Wendell Phillips.*

9, 10. (9) **I have made**, by my own endeavours. The question as asked here implies a negative answer. **heart clean**, attained to moral perfection.[a] **pure**, *comp.* Jer. ii. 22. (10)

a "Dr. Livingstone once asked a Bechuana what he understood by

the word 'holiness.' He answered, 'When copious showers have descended during the night, and all the earth, and leaves, and cattle are washed clean, and the sun rising shows a drop of dew on every blade of grass, and the air breathes fresh—that is holiness.'"—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Job viii. 6, xi. 4, xvi. 17, xxxiii. 9.

b O. Zöckler.

v. 9. *Bp. Browning*, i. 379; *C. Chais*, ii. 367; *B. Beddome*, 6.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Roberts.

divers weights, *Heb.* "an ephah and an ephah: a stone and a stone." "Deception in business is a peculiar and prominent form of that universal sinfulness which has just been spoken of as having no exceptions,"[b] comp. ch. xi. 1, xvi. 11.

No absolute perfection in this world (*v.* 9).—I. The truth that is here intimated is clear—1. From express declarations of Holy Writ; 2. From such instances as are undeniable: 3. From the confessions of God's most eminent saints. II. The improvement we should make of it. It should call forth—1. Our humiliation; 2. Our watchfulness; 3. Our gratitude; 4. Our love to Christ.[c]

Divers weights.—Here we have a true view of the way in which nearly all travelling merchants deal with their customers. See that Mohammedan pedlar with his bags over his shoulder: the one contains his merchandise, the other his deceitful weights. He comes to your door, throws his bags on the ground, and is willing either to buy or to sell. Have you any old silver, gold, jewels, precious stones, iron, or lead, he is ready to be your customer; but he only buys with his own weights, which are much heavier than the standard. Should you, however, require to purchase any articles, then he has other weights by which he sells; and you may often see him fumbling for a considerable time in the bag before he can find those which are less in weight than the regular standard.[d]

11. by his doings, bec. conduct everywhere is the revelation of character. Some think this should be his "plays or sports:"[a] but the word means, "the individual results of the child's self-determination." pure, or clean.[b]

Honesty in a child.—In a country school a large class were standing to spell. In the lesson there was a very hard word. I put the word to the scholar at the head, and he missed it: I passed it to the next, and the next, and so on through the whole class, till it came to the last scholar—the smallest of the class.—and he spelled it right; at least, I understood him so, and he went to the head, above seventeen boys and girls, all older than himself. I then turned round and wrote the word on the black board, so that they might all see how it was spelled, and learn it better. But no sooner had I written it than the little boy at the head cried out. "Oh, I didn't say it so, Miss W——: I said *e* instead of *i*;" and he went back to the foot, of his own accord, quicker than he had gone to the head. Was not he an honest boy? I should always have thought he spelled it right if he had not told me; but he was too honest to take any credit that did not belong to him.[c]

12, 13. (12) Lord hath made, and so will surely take account of how both are used. (13) sleep, that of the slothful. Comp. ch. xii. 11, xix 15. open thine eyes,[a] intimating that the resistance of slothfulness is a moral duty. Be wide awake, this is a secret of prosperity.

The ear and the eye (*v.* 12).—Two practical conclusions. I. That God should be studied in these organs. 1. In them the Divine wisdom is manifest: 2. And also the Divine goodness; 3. The Divine wisdom is symbolised. II. That God should be served in these organs. 1. Translate the sensations they convey to us into Divine ideas; 2. Apply the Divine ideas to the formation of our characters.[b]

a Ewald, Umbreit.

b "'The child is the father of the man,' and the earliest actions are prophecies of the future, whether it will be pure and right, or unclean and evil."—*Spk. Com.*

"Every look, every movement, every expression, does something towards forming the character of the little heir to immortal life."—*Mrs. Child.*

c Fam. Treasury.

a "He who rises late may trot all day, and not have overtaken his business at night."—*Franklin.*

"I never knew any man come to greatness and eminence who lay in bed of a morning."—*Dean Swift.*

"I was at my studies in winter often ere the

Educate your sleep.—We do not plead for a very limited quantity of sleep. Many persons have habituated themselves to a very sparing allowance of four or five hours on the average; and, perhaps, abstaining from all animal food, and from all improper and very much proper excitement, this is enough. But there are few for whom it is sufficient; from seven to eight hours should be the average of your sleep. As the mind becomes powerful, and the body loosens its hold upon it, sleep flies away; intense mental occupation forbids long slumber; the mind says, "Sleep no more." Yet we find, to be "a long and sound sleeper" is included by the oldest writers among the signs of longevity. What hours of time, however, are murdered through the turning again to slumber! What hours, my friends, have you and I murdered! Alas, alas! Have we lost one hour a day? Three hundred and sixty-five hours in the year; in ten years we lose one year of labour. What histories might we have read! what languages have acquired! what studies might we have conquered! A year's labour entirely thrown away. But perhaps, instead of one hour a day, two, three, four; and what a squandering is here! Yes, if you would create and make time, educate your sleep![c]

14—16. (14) **naught**, *etc.*, comp. Ge. xxiii. 15. It is the custom of Eastern traders to chaffer much over their prices. The buyer will complain in order to get goods cheaper. **boasteth**, of the article which, by undervaluing, he secured so cheap.[a] (15) **precious jewel**, *lit.* a vessel of preciousness: or most precious of all: comp. ch. iii. 14—16. (16) **take his garment**, this represents the order of the judge.[b] Ch. xxii. 27. **strange woman**,[c] better read as plural, "strangers." Ch. xxvii. 13.

Knowledge lies not in mere words.—I heard two persons on the Wengern Alp talking by the hour together of the names of ferns; not a word about their characteristics, uses, or habits, but a medley of crack-jaw titles and nothing more. They evidently felt that they were ventilating their botany, and kept each other in countenance by alternate volleys of nonsense. Well, friend, they were about as sensible as those doctrinalists who for ever talk over the technicalities of religion, but know nothing by experience of its spirit and power. Are we not all too apt to amuse ourselves after the same fashion? He who knows mere Linnæan names, but has never seen a flower, is as reliable in botany, as he is in theology who can descant upon supralapsarianism, but has never known the love of Christ in his heart.

> "True religion's more than doctrine,
> Something must be known and felt."[d]

17—19. (17) **bread of deceit**, secured by means of trickery. **mouth . . gravel**, Heb. and Arab. phrase for getting into trouble. Sand or gravel in the mouth is peculiarly unpleasant. (18) **by counsel**, ch. xv. 22. **good . . war**, Lu. xiv. 31. The word for advice is lit. *pilotings:* and is interesting as a *maritime* metaphor. (19) **talebearer**, ch. xi. 13. **flattereth**, or opens his lips: talks too freely, so is pretty sure to do mischief.[a]

Talebearing.—The carrying of a tale, and reporting what such a one said or such a one did, is the way to sow such grudges,

sound of any bell awoke men to labour or devotion; in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors till attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught, then with useful and generous labours preserving the body's health and hardiness."—*John Milton.*

v. 12. *J. Lafonte*, 87; *B. Newton*, i. 167; *Dr. J. Jortin*, iii. 302; *J. Slade*, iv. 105.

b Dr. Thomas.

c Paxton Hood.

a "The *v.* censures the well-known craft, the deceitful misrepresentation, with which business men seek to buy their wares as cheap as possible, below their value if they can."—*O. Zöckler.*

b "Distrain upon him, even to his garment, bec. he is surety for a stranger, and may soon be reduced to beggary, and then thou wilt not be able to recover anything of him."—*Wordsworth.*

c "Strange women have strange ways of impoverishing men to enrich themselves."—*Mat. Henry.*

d Spurgeon.

a "Those who love to tell news will hardly keep secrets."—*Fausset.*

"To hear an open slander is a curse: but not to find an answer is a worse."—*Ovid.*

b Dr. South.

to kindle such heart-burnings between persons, as oftentimes break forth and flame to the consumption of families, courts, and perhaps at length of cities and kingdoms. The mischief such incendiaries do is incredible, as being indeed for the most part inevitable. And a vine or a rose tree may as well flourish when there is a secret worm lurking and gnawing at the root of them, as the peace of those societies thrive that have such concealed plagues wrapped up in their hearts and bowels.[b]

a Pr. vii. 9.

b "He points to the man who, with a voracious greed for wealth, seizes every opportunity to attain it, regardless of truth, honour, and justice, and thus becomes rich in a short time. But he is not blessed. Discovery comes and clothes him with infamy, conscience is roused and torments him. The curses of the defrauded and the frowns of the Almighty are over him."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"God only looks to pure and not to full hands."—*Labertius.*

c Whitecross.

20, 21. (20) curseth, *etc.*, Ex. xxi. 17; Le. xx. 9; Mat. xv. 4. lamp, or candle; fig. of life. Ch. xiii. 9. obscure darkness,[a] *lit.* the apple of the eye of darkness. "He shall be wrapped in the darkness of poverty, disappointment, and remorse." (21) may be, these words are better left out. gotten hastily, greedily sought after by unjust means.[b] This may refer to the violent doings of the bad son of verse 20. not be blessed, God only witnesses to that wh. is righteous and good.

The biter bit.—A certain counsellor, famed for his eloquence, and notorious for his covetousness, and who seldom considered the goodness of the cause which he undertook, provided his client could pay him, was consulted by a robber, who promised him a large reward if he brought him off. The pleader so dexterously managed the matter, that he saved the rogue from the gallows; and the client, to show his gratitude to his friend, so soon as he was set at liberty, hastened to his house, and presented him with a thousand crowns. The counsellor, in return, solicited the favour of his company to supper, and the night being stormy, farther invited him to lodge, which offer he accepted. The guest rose in the middle of the night, found the way to the room of his host, and without ceremony bound and gagged him, repocketed his thousand crowns, and broke open a chest, in which he found plenty of money, with which, after bidding him good night, he marched off in triumph. Though the conduct of the robber calls for the strongest reprobation, the counsellor, by screening him from justice, deserved no better a return.[c]

a "He that studieth revenge keepeth His wounds open."—*Lord Bacon.*

b De. xxxii. 35; Pr. xxiv. 29; 1 Pe. iii. 9.

c Jer. x. 23.

22—25. (22) I will recompense,[a] *see* Ro. xii. 17—19.[b] save thee, from the evil; and perhaps also is meant. fr. the revengeful spirit. (23) divers weights, *v.* 10. (24) man's goings,[c] *lit.* stately steppings of a strong man. Prob. here. the issues, the places where a man goes to. understand . . way, so as to take it into his own management. (25) devoureth, or hastily maketh a vow, without due consideration; as did Herod, and Saul the king.

v. 22. *H. Boys*, 47.

v. 25. *Bishop Andrewes, Opuscula*, 1.

A providential escape.—An incident of the war in America.—The following curious incident is told in a letter from the camp of the Secessionists:—"As their general, Kirby Smith (the general of the Marylanders), was nearing the battle-field, with the troops for reinforcement, they met the wounded and some stragglers going away from the field, and General Smith begged that one of them would show him the way to the battle. All said it would be certain death, as they had not the countersign. He asked again, 'Will no one guide me to the battle?' A Mr. Hamilton said it might cost him his life, but he would do it. As they got near Beauregard's pickets, Hamilton raised his left arm, making signs to them, but they pointed their guns towards him;

"What is becoming is honest, and whatever is honest must always be becoming."—*Cicero.*

and as he thought he would be instantly shot, he prayed, 'God have mercy upon me,' and, in the fervour of his prayer raised his right hand upwards also. It was the countersign—both arms raised—and he was saved. Was it not a most remarkable Providence thus to have it given to him?"

26—28. (26) **scattereth**, as *v.* 8. **wheel**,[a] the threshing roller. This separates the chaff from the wheat. Comp. word, "tribulation." (27) **spirit**, or life: that wh. God breathed into us, wh. distinguishes us from the lower animals.[b] **inward**, *etc.*, *i.e.* his most secret thoughts. (28) **mercy and truth**, *comp.* ch iii. 3, xvi. 6—12.

Conscience (*v.* 27).—I. What is the office of conscience? 1. Not a distinguishing, but an impelling faculty; 2. An impulse to be like God; 3. The inward organ of God; 4. The basis of all morality. II. What is our duty with regard to it? 1. To inform it; 2. To assist it; 3. To obey it. III. What does the Gospel do for it? 1. It makes it sensitive; 2. It renders it tranquil.[c]—*Conscience.*—I. The office of conscience. 1. To distinguish between right and wrong: 2. To incite to the performance of what is right, and the avoidance of what is wrong; 3. To commend what is right, and to censure what is wrong. II. Our duty with regard to it. 1. To recognise its supremacy; 2. To listen to its voice; 3. To consult its records; 4. To get it readjusted in accordance with the will of the Lord of the conscience.[d]

Power of conscience.—Bessus.—It is said of Bessus, a native of Pelonia, in Greece, that being one day seen by his neighbours pulling down some birds' nests, and passionately destroying the young, they severely reproved him for his ill-nature and cruelty. He replied that their notes were to him insufferable, as they never ceased twitting of the murder of his father.

29, 30. (29) **their strength**, bodily vigour.[a] 1 Jno. ii. 14. (30) **blueness**, *etc.*, lit. joinings: "the process of uniting the edges of a wound throws off purulent matter." **stripes**, the fig. for corporal punishment, then for all chastisements. **inward**, *etc.*, as *v.* 27.[b]

Youth and age.—Should a youth despise the advice of a grey-headed man, the latter will point to his hairs. When young men presume to give advice to the aged, they say, "Look at our grey hairs." Do old people commit things unworthy of their years, the young ask, "Why have you these grey hairs?" intimating they ought to be the emblem of wisdom.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **as the rivers**, *etc.*, the irrigating channels:[a] or the rivers, wh. God fills as He pleases, and guides on their free course through the valleys. It is implied that God uses kings for the blessing of His people. And it is also implied that there is no independent sovereignty. (2) **every way**, *etc.*, see ch. xvi. 2.[b]

God and the human race (*vv.* 1—3).—In these verses we have God unfolded to us—I. As the Controller of human hearts. 1. This is an undoubted fact; 2. It interferes not with human responsibility. II. As the Judge of human character. God

He who opposes honesty never had any.

a Is. xxviii. 27, 28.

b "Such a life, with all its powers of insight, consciousness, reflection, is as a lamp wh. God has lighted, throwing its rays into the darkest recesses of the heart."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 27. *Bp. Rust, Rem.* 21; *Dr. J. Foster*, iv. 75; *S. Lowell*, 201.

c W. W. Whythe.

d G. Brooks.

Conscience—"God's vicegerent in the soul."—*Buchan.*

a Pr. xvi. 31, xvii. 6.

b "Trials bring man face to face with God—God and he touch."—*F. W. Robertson.*

v. 29. *Dr. G. Lawson*, 175.

c Roberts.

a "Some suppose there is an allusion to a gardener directing the rills of water through the different parts of his ground, and that the comparison is between the ease with which the gardener does this, and the case

with wh. the Almighty controls the purposes and volitions of the human soul."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Pr. xiv. 12, xvi. 25.

v. 1. *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vi. 62.

c Dr. Thomas.

"Man, through ignorance first, and need of knowing, fell. Now, grown so wise, he thinks he lacketh nothing; no, not God. Is faith here? I have missed her from the earth this many an age."—*Bailey.*

c Bailey.

judges character—1. Not according to their own estimate; 2. Not according to the result of their conduct; 3. But by the heart. III. As the approver of human goodness.[c]

The origin of man.—

Festus: Whence are we?
Luniel: Child of the royal blood of man redeemed,
The starry strain of spirit, thence we are.
This, therefore, be thy future and thy fate.
As water putrefied and purified,
Seven times by turns, will never more corrupt,
So thou and thine whole race, all change endured,
Through doubt, sin, knowledge, faith, love, power, and bliss,
Shall practise every note of Being's scale,
Till the whole orb coharmonise with heaven,
And pure imperial peace rule all below;
Till, star by star, these bright and sacred seats,
Whose ancestry of sempiternal suns
Comes of the vast and universal void,
And in whose lineage of light yon earth
Seems but a new possession scarcely worth
Accepting or rejecting, shall at last
Into primordial nothingness relapse;
And man, the universal son of God,
Who occupied in time those starry spheres,
Regenerate and redeemed shall live for aye,
Made one with Deity; all evil gone,
Dispersed as by a thunderclap of light.[c]

3, 4. (3) **do justice**, *etc.*, the comparative unimportance of ceremonial comes into full view in the later Jewish literature.[a] (4) **high look**, haughtiness of eyes; the expression of pride. **proud heart**,[b] in wh. conceited and boastful feelings are cherished. **plowing**, *i.e.* the broad lands which he has to plough, and is so conceited about. **sin**, this it is, however attractive its aspect may be.[c]

Note on v. 4.—The margin has, instead of ploughing, light: "The light of the wicked." The Tamul translation has, the lamp of the wicked. In Eastern language, as well as in the Scriptures, the word lamp is often used to denote the life of man: but in this passage it means the prosperity of the wicked. "Look at Valen, how brightly does his lamp burn in these days!" "Yes, his lamp has now a thousand faces." Thus the haughty eyes, the proud hearts, and the prosperity of the wicked, were alike sinful before God. The lamp (*i.e.* prosperity) of the wicked is sin.[d]

A poor apprentice.—A poor boy was put an apprentice to a mechanic, and being the youngest of those bound to the same master, was often sent on errands: they frequently required him to fetch spirituous liquors, declaring that it did them good. They often urged him to partake of the intoxicating potion with them, but he invariably and resolutely refused. He was in consequence treated by them with mockery and scorn; often weeping in solitude on account of their derision and insults. But mark the sequel. Every one of the scoffing apprentices became a confirmed drunkard, but the abstinent youth realised a fortune of about £20,000. He employed nearly a hundred men, all of whom renounced the use of spirituous drinks. He also exerted

a 1 Sa. xv. 22; Ps. l. 7—15; Is. i. 11; Ho. vi. 6; Mi. vi. 7, 8.

"This maxim of the Prov. was a bold saying then; it is a bold saying still."—*Stanley.*

Swelling of heart.

c "The evil spirit called sin may be trained up to politeness, and made to be genteel sin: it may be elegant, cultivated sin; it may be very exclusive and fashionable sin; it may be industrious, thrifty sin; it may be a great political manager, a great commercial operator, a great inventor; it may be learned, scientific, eloquent, highly-poetic sin! Still, it is sin."—*Bushnell.*

d Roberts.

a very beneficial influence upon thousands more, helping to fit them not only for useful and honourable positions on earth, but also for eternal happiness in the world to come.

5—7. (5) diligent, here, "keeps steadily on,"[a] in opposition to "excited haste," the contrast is bet. steady industry and rashness.[b] Fortunes suddenly gained are often as suddenly lost; wealth earned by patient labour is usually well stored. (6) by a lying tongue, put generally for deceptive methods.[c] vanity, *etc.*, lit. "is a fleeting breath of them that seek death." The word *vanity* suggests the fig. of chaff or stubble in the wind. seek death, *comp.* ch. viii. 36, xvii. 19. robbery, wh. all wealth secured by deception must be called. destroy them, sweep them away.[d] do judgment, or that wh. is just and right.

The right and the wrong road to plenty (*vv.* 5—7).—Desirable to have plenty of a good thing: money, knowledge, etc., good things. I. The right road. Diligence, which stands opposed—1. To laziness; 2. Rashness. II. The wrong road. 1. Falsehood is a wrong road; 2. Dishonesty.[e]

Covetousness.—Tarpeia, the daughter of Tarpeius, keeper of the Roman capitol, agreed to betray it into the hands of the Sabines, on this condition: "that she should have for her reward that which they carried on their left arms," meaning the golden bracelets they wore upon them. The Sabines having been let in by Tarpeia, according to compact. Titulus, their king, though well pleased with carrying the place, yet detesting the manner in which it was done, commanded the Sabines to give the fair traitor her promised reward, by throwing to her all they wore on their left arms; on which, unclasping his bracelet from his left arm, he cast that, together with his shield, upon her. All the Sabines following the example of their chief, the traitress was speedily overwhelmed with the number of bracelets and bucklers heaped upon her, and thus perished miserably under the weight of the reward which she had earned, by the double treachery, to her father and to her country.[f]

8, 9. (8) froward, perverse, or crooked. strange, the Heb. word used here means, *guilt-burdened;* and the clause should read, Crooked is the way of the guilty man. right, and therefore is sure to have right issues. "What is right is evermore expedient, binding, and performable." (9) corner,[a] a turret, or arbour on the roof. brawling, contentious, complaining, quarrelsome.[b] wide house, *lit.* "house of companionship," or a house shared with her. Perhaps also suggesting a house occupied by several families.

The unregenerate and the regenerate (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. The way of the unregenerate—1. Is froward; 2. Strange: neither the original nor the authorised way. II. The way of the regenerate—1. Pure: 2. Right in action. A right work implies—(1) A right standard; (2) A right motive.[c]

House-roofs in the East.—How pleasant soever the arbour, or wicker-closet, upon the roof, may be during the burning heats of summer, it must be very disagreeable in the rainy season. They who lodge in either at that time, must be exposed continually to the storm beating in upon them from every quarter. In allusion, perhaps, to this uncomfortable situation, Solomon observes: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawl-

a "The man who labours in substantial and continuous methods, as opposed to the impatient, restless fortune-hunter, who is easily led to adopt base and deceitful modes of acquiring."—*O. Zöckler.*

b "Undue hurry is as fatal to success as undue procrastination."—*Spk. Com.*

Pr. xii. 11, xiii. 11, xix. 2, xx. 21, xxviii. 20.

c "Falsehood is a great fortune-maker here in England, and although it is a short and popular road, it is ultimately a ruinous one."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

d "The orig. fig. seems rather to suggest, *cut with a saw.*"—*Fausset.*

e Dr. D. Thomas.

f Whitecross.

a "The corner of the flat roof of an Eastern house was exposed to all changes of weather, and the point of the Proverb lies in the thought that all winds and storms wh. a man might meet with there are more endurable than the tempest within."—*Spk. Com.*

b Socrates being asked, "Why he endured his wife?" replied, "By this means I have a schoolmaster at home, and an example how I should behave myself abroad.

For I shall be the more quiet with others, being thus daily exercised and taught in the forbearing of her."

c Dr. D. Thomas.

"As a little spark many times setteth a whole house on fire, even so a contentious and froward person, of a little matter of nought, maketh much debate and division among lovers and friends."—*Cawdray.*

d Paxton.

ing woman in a wide house:" in a corner formed with boughs or rushes into a little arbour, which, although cool and pleasant in the dry and sultry months of summer, is a cool and cheerless lodge when the earth is drenched with rain, or covered with snow. The royal preacher, in another Proverb, compares the contentions of a wife to the continual dropping of an arbour, placed upon the house-top, in the rainy season, than which it is not easy to conceive anything more disagreeable: "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping;" an incessant and unavoidable cause of uneasiness or vexation. Instructed probably by his own feelings, harassed and goaded, as was meet, by the daily quarrels of his seraglio, he returns in a succeeding apothegm to the subject: "A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike." It appears from these Proverbs that the booths were generally constructed in the corner, where two walls met, for greater safety; for, on the middle of the roof, they had been too much exposed to the storm. This is confirmed by Dr. Russel, who remarks, in a manuscript note, that these booths in Syria are often placed near the walls; so minutely correct are even the most incidental observations of the inspired writers.[d]

10, 11. (10) **desireth,** loveth and seeketh. **neighbour . . eyes,** *i.e.* "on account of his violent wickedness and selfishness, even his friend experiences no sympathy from him."[a] (11) **when,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xix. 25. The idea of the *v.* is, that while the simple will only learn by the terrors of punishment,[b] the wise learn by teaching.

The wicked (*vv.* 10—12).—They are here presented to us in three phrases. I. As animated by the worst of dispositions. 1. Malignity; 2. Derision. II. As subject to Divine punishment. 1. From the principle of moral causation; 2. From the operations of moral memory; 3. From the declarations of Scripture; 4. From the history of mankind. III. As studied by the good. 1. The influence of their punishment when studied by the simple; 2. When studied by the wise; 3. When studied by the righteous.[c]

True wisdom.—

Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive:
That I would have thee do; and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy
On every foolish brain that humours you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He that is so respectless in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I that you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguish it,
And you be left like an unsavoury snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd ha' you sober and contain yourself:
Not that your sail be bigger than your boat;
But mod'rate your expenses now (at first)
As you may keep the same proportion still.

a "So strongly does he desire to do evil that he will not even spare his friend if in his way."—*Fausset.*

b "Let the law be executed upon a scorner, and even he that is simple will be awakened and alarmed by it, and will discern, more than he did, the evil of sin, and will take warning by it."—*Mat. Henry.*

Ps. lxiv. 7—9.

c Dr. D. Thomas.

"Wisdom, though richer than Peruvian mines, and sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,—what is she but the means of happiness? that unobtain'd, than folly more a fool."—*Young.*

d Ben Jonson.

Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy and mere borrow'd thing
From dead men's dust and bones ; and none of yours,
Except you make, or hold it.[d]

12. righteous, *etc.*, the word *man* is not necessary. The reference is to God as the "righteous One."[a] overthroweth, or precipitates : makes to slide down.

Religion of the heart.—The Rev. R. Major, a missionary in Ceylon, once visited a poor leper, who had been led, through the instructions which he had received, to feel his sinful state by nature, and his need of a Saviour ; and having come to the Lord Jesus, he had found pardon and peace, so that, in the midst of all his outward wretchedness, he was enabled to rejoice in the hope of the Gospel. He was accompanied by a native, of whom he had much hope. Having conversed with the poor leper, who was now in a deplorable state as to his body, but filled with holy joy and peace of mind, on leaving the hut, the native said, with much emphasis, "Oh, sir, that man is going to heaven!" "What makes you think so?" replied Mr. Major ; "could not you say the same thing?" "Ah, sir! I know it," said he ; "but that man feels it." Does not this reply of the poor man suggest to us the difference between real and nominal religion, between that which influences the heart and brings forth fruit in the life, and that with which, alas! too many are content,—the mere head knowledge, which will stand us in no stead when the tempests of disease and death rage around us?[b]

a Comp. Pr. xxii. 12 ; Job xxxiv. 17. "By this righteous One God is meant, the supreme judge and rewarder."—*O. Zöckler, etc.*
"Other com. preserve the reference to the righteous man, and trans. as follows: 'The righteous man teacheth or gives instruction to the house of the wicked, to turn away the wicked from evil.'"—*Boothroyd.*
"The just man thinks maturely concerning the house of the wicked, that he may draw away the wicked from evil."—*Vulgate.*
b *S. T. Treasury.*

13. stoppeth . . poor, as determined to give no heed to his cry. Disregard of the poor and needy is sin against the brotherhood. cry himself, the law of retribution will surely reach him.[a] "If the cries of the poor be not heard by us, they will be heard against us."

The cry of the poor (*v.* 10).—Let us consider three things. I. Social distress—the poor. 1. The deserving poor ; 2. The undeserving. II. Social heartlessness. Who should regard this cry? 1. The wealthy ; 2. The legislating. III. Social retribution.[b]

The slothful.—He is full of wishing, but far from working. As the cat, he would fain have the fish, but is unwilling to wet his feet ; his desires are destitute of suitable endeavours, and therefore rather harm him than help him. Like Ishbosheth, he lieth on his bed till he is deprived of his life. He thinketh to be hurried in haste to heaven, to be carried as passengers in a ship, asleep in their cabins, to their haven, but is all the while in a deceitful dream. There is no going to those heavens where Christ is in His glory, as the sick man came to the house, where Christ was, in his estate of ignominy, let down in a bed.[c]—*Note on v.* 13.—The sluggard is fond of sleep ; and, to excuse his slothfulness, he makes use of the pretence, when he is to go out of his house in the morning dawn, and to follow his business, that he might fall a prey to one of the wild beasts which prowl about during the night. When it becomes dark, the people of the East shut themselves up in their houses for fear of the wild beasts. Thus Alvarez, in his account of Ethiopia, says, that "in Abyssinia, as soon as night sets in, nobody is to be seen abroad for fear of wild beasts, of which the country is full."[d]

a Illus. in Matt. xviii. 23–34.
"Howard's rule was this, a rule wh. he embodied in his noble life, 'That our superfluities give way to other men's convenience ; that our conveniences give way to other men's necessaries ; and that even our necessaries give way sometimes to other men's extremities.'"—*Dav Thomas, D.D.*
"Charity is the scope of all God's commands."—*St. Chrysostom.*
1 Jno iii. 17 ; Jas. ii. 13.
b *Dr. D. Thomas.*
c *Swinnocke.*
d *Rosenmuller*

14. gift, usually, as here, with the idea of a *bribe*. in secret,

a And so *Matt. Henry*, who says

"Covetousness is commonly a master sin, and has the command of other lusts."

"I desire to reconcile me to his friendly peace: 'tis death to me, to be at enmity; I hate it, and desire all good men's love."—*Shakespeare.*

b Ex. xxiii. 8; De. xvi. 19; Ec. x. 19.

c Cheever.

so delicately done that none may know it, and the honour of him who takes it may seem to be preserved. *Zöckler* prefers the idea that skilful liberality is meant here.[a] **pacifieth**, or bends, extinguishes. **a reward**, this word suggests that the reference in both sentences is to bribes.[b] **in the bosom**, *i.e.* the lap or fold of the garment where it is secreted.

Fitz-James and his sovereign.—It is said of Sir John Fitz-James that the instant he was seated on the bench, he lost all recollection of his best friends, that would in the least degree have interfered with the administration of justice. A relation once solicited a favour of him. "Come to my house," said he, "and I will deny you nothing; but in the king's court I must do you justice." The attorney-general was weak and criminal enough to request his interest on the part of the king, in a cause to be tried before him. "I will do the king right," he replied. A verdict was given against the crown, and the attorney-general expostulated with Fitz-James, who dismissed the subject by adding, "I could not do his majesty right, if I had not done justice."[c]

15, 16. (15) **joy**, *etc.*, virtue is its own reward. Righteous ways are pleasant ways. The idea here is that the righteous *love* right doing, and do not need the impulse of gift or reward. **workers of iniquity**, who act unrighteously, on consideration of bribes. (16) **wandereth**, at his own will. This word is contrasted with *remain*, or abide. The man may think he wanders, but really he remains.[a] **dead**, Heb. *Rephaim*, giants.[b] "He shall never see the joys of the future life."

The wanderer's gloomy state (*v.* 16).—I. What is meant by wandering out of the way of understanding? 1. The book of nature and of Providence is the way of understanding; 2. So is the Book of Revelation; 3. The place of pure worship. II. Observe the wanderer's gloomy state. 1. The dead are those who are dead in sin; 2. Those who are doomed to eternal death.[c]

Robbing the widow.—Sir Thomas More's judgment.—A gentleman of rank had wronged a poor widow of a sum of money, and was ordered by Sir T. More, when lord chancellor, forthwith to make restitution of the property, with the costs attending the suit. "I hope then your lordship will grant me a long day to pay." "I will grant your motion," instantly replied the chancellor. "Monday next is Barnabas day, which is the longest in the whole year; pay it then to the widow without fail, or I will commit you to the Fleet Prison."

"A slight tone of irony is perceptible in the word for 'abide.' 'He shall find a resting-place, but it shall be in Hades.'"—*Spk. Com.*

b "Here is a clear testimony to a state of retribution after death."—*Wordsworth.*

Jer. xiv. 10.

v. 16. *J. Mede*, i. 41.

c E. Phillips.

17, 18. (17) **pleasure**, sport, indulgence, costly luxury. Things opposed to business, and serious duty. **poor man**, bec. a pleasure-seeking life is expensive, and drains income, instead of adding to it. **wine and oil**, or perfume: the familiar symbols of social festivity.[a] (18) **a ransom**, an atonement, or propitiation. "The Divine wrath turns from him who is comparatively righteous to fall upon the head of the evil doer."[b]

Self-indulgence (*v.* 17).—I. It involves an extravagance of expenditure. II. A fostering of laziness. Hence it leads to—1. Material poverty; 2. Intellectual poverty; 3. Spiritual poverty.[c]

Opinion of Rousseau.—"It is impossible," says Rousseau, "that an establishment [the theatre at Geneva] so contrary to our ancient manners can be generally applauded. How many generous citizens will see, with indignation, this monument of luxury

"Many delight more in giving of presents than in paying their debts."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

a Ps. civ. 15; Pr. xxvii. 9. Economy is income.

"Profligate voluptuousness, with its expensive viands, its luxurious refinements, its costly establishments, and its foolish pastimes, makes light work with fortunes."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Pr. xi. 8; Isa. xliii. 3.

c Dr. Thomas.

and effeminacy raise itself upon the ruins of our ancient simplicity! Where would be the imprudent mother who would dare to carry her daughter to this dangerous school? And what respectable woman would not think herself dishonoured in going there? In all countries the profession of a player is dishonourable, and those who exercise it are everywhere contemned."[d]

19. **better**, *etc.*, comp. *v.* 9.[a] **wilderness**, *Heb.* "the land of the desert." **contentious**, or quarrelsome. **angry**, or passionate. "Even those that are one flesh, if they be not withal one spirit, have no joy of their union."

Matrimonial misery (*v.* 19).—I. The torturing power of a brawling wife. II. Even uncomfortable positions are preferable to her company. 1. The corner of a housetop; 2. The wilderness. III. The demoralising power of sin. IV. The caution required in matrimonial alliances.[b]

Eastern scolds.—The termagants of the East are certainly not inferior to those of their own sex in any part of the world: in some respects, the females are perhaps more timid and retired than those of Europe; but let them once go beyond the prescribed bounds, and let their powers be brought fairly into action, and they are complete furies. Has any one caused a woman's child to cry, does a neighbour intimate that she is not what she ought to be, or that some of her friends are no better than they should be, the whoop is immediately sounded, and the brawl begins. She commences her abuse in her best and highest tone of voice: vociferates all the scandal she can think of, and all she can invent. Sometimes she runs up to her antagonist, as if about to knock her down: again she retires, apparently to go home; but, no! she thinks of something more which ought not to be lost, and again returns to the contest. At intervals (merely to vary the scene) she throws up dust in the air, and curses her opponent, her husband, and her children. Should the poor woman not have been blessed with a progeny, that will not be overlooked, and a thousand highly provoking and indecent allusions will be made. See her fiery eyes, her dishevelled hair, her uplifted hand, and she is more like a fury from another region than a human being. One of their philosophers describes some of the defects in young females which ought to deter any man from marrying them. "Those who love to be at the house of other people, who are great sleepers, who love dancing and other sports, who are wounded by the arrows of Cama (Cupid), who love before their fathers betroth them, who have voices like thunder, who have tender, or rolling, or cat eyes, who have coarse hair, who are older than yourself, who are full of smiles, who are very athletic, who are caught in the hell of useless and strange religions, who despise the *gooroo*, and call the gods statues; have nothing to do with them." Solomon says, in another place, "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping;" and the Tamul proverb has it, "She is like the thunder of the rain, and is ever dropping."[c]

20, 21. (20) **oil**, "the precious unguent wh. represents wealth." By care and diligence the wise preserve and increase wealth.[a] **spendeth it up**, *lit.* swalloweth it up: wastes it. Reference may be to the foolish son who wastefully squanders all his father may have carefully gathered for him. (21) **followeth after**, earnestly seeking, really endeavours to live

"A thousand evils do afflict that man which hath to himself an idle and unprofitable carcase."—*Sallust.*

d Cheever.

a 1 Cor. vii. 15.

b Dr. D. Thomas.

An Eastern sage says, "Should one woman scold, the whole earth will shake; should two commence, the sign Pisces will fall; if three join in the brawl, the sea will dry up; but if four try their powers, what will become of the world?" In the *Scanda Purana* it is said, "It is better for any one to fall into hell, than to perform the duties of a householder with a woman who will not respect her husband's word. Is there any other disease, any other *yama*, than spending life with such a woman?"

c Roberts.

"Two things well considered would prevent many quarrels; first, to have it well ascertained whether we are not disputing about terms rather than things; and, secondly, to examine whether that on which we differ is worth contending about."—*C. Colton.*

a "The wise man keeps a store in reserve. He gains uprightly, spends moderately, never exhausts himself."—*Syk. Com.*

righteously and charitably. life . . honour, in addition to the "righteousness" he seeks.[b] In the long run public respect, and places of honour, are sure to come to the good.

Wealth in relation to character (*v.* 20).—I. It is desirable for the good. 1. He will get out of it good for his own soul; 2. He will use it for the good of others. II. It is undesirable for the wicked. 1. He spends it on himself; 2. He squanders it away.[c]

Evils of profligacy.—To burn away, in mad waste, the Divine aromas and plainly celestial elements from our existence: to change our holy of holies into a place of riot; to make the soul itself hard, impious, barren! Surely a day is coming, when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life: how divine is the blush of young human cheeks: how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable if forgotten, is the duty laid, not on women only, but on every creature, in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come again, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble, pious valour, to amend us and the age of bronze and lacquer, how can they ever come? The scandalous bronze-lacquer age of hungry animalisms, spiritual impotencies and mendacities will have to run its course, till the pit swallow it.[d]

22—24. (22) scaleth, *etc.*, as illus. 2 Sam. v. 6—9; 1 Chr. xi. 6—9. In war counsel and good judgment are of more importance than brute strength.[a] strength, the tower or fortress on wh. they chiefly rely. (23) whoso, *etc.*, comp. ch. xiii. 3, xix. 6. tongue, the unruly member.[b] (24) scorner, or scoffer.[c]

The government of the tongue (*v.* 23).—I. Such a government is necessary. From an ungoverned tongue come—1. Troubles on self; 2. Troubles of social distress; 3. Troubles on others. II. Such a government is practicable. 1. The tongue is not an involuntary organ; 2. Consider the silence of Christ when before His insulting judges.[d]

Slips of the tongue.—Slips of the tongue are sometimes found very inconvenient by those persons who, owing to some unlucky want of correspondence between their wits and their utterance, say one thing when they mean to say another, or bawl out something which the slightest degree of forethought would have kept unsaid. But more serious mischief arises from that misuse of words which occurs in all inaccurate writers. Many are the men who, merely for the want of understanding what they say, have blundered into heresies and erroneous assertions of every kind, which they have afterwards passionately and pertinaciously defended, till they have established themselves in the profession, if not in the belief, of some pernicious doctrine or opinion, to their own great injury, and that of their deluded followers, and of the commonwealth.[e]—*Conversation.*—Tasso's conversation was neither gay nor brilliant. Dante was either taciturn or satirical. Butler was sullen or biting. Gray seldom talked or smiled. Hogarth and Swift were very absent-minded in company. Milton was unsociable, and even irritable, when pressed into conversation. Kirwan, though copious and eloquent in public addresses, was meagre and dull in colloquial discourse. Virgil was heavy in conversation. La Fontaine appeared heavy, coarse, and stupid; he could not speak and describe what he had just

"If a rich man is proud of his wealth, he should not be praised until it is known how he spends it."—*Socrates.*

b 1 Ki. iii. 11; Mat. vi. 33.

v. 21. *Bp. Sprat,* 195.

c Dr. D. Thomas. In one of England's great cathedrals rests one whose grave-stone, according to his own directions, bears but the single word *Miserrimus*, "most miserable." He was a man of wealth and position, or his sepulchre could not have been there. This is not an infrequent confession of the rich.

d Carlyle.

a Ec. vii. 19, ix. 15. "Strength, wanting judgment and policy to rule, overturneth itself."—*Horace.*

b "Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desirest to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue."—*Quarles.*

c "Humility to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness, and to all it's safety."—*Sir Thos. More.*

d Dr. D. Thomas. Bishop Latimer, when examined before Bonner, at first answered without much thought, but, hearing the noise

seen: but then he was the model of poetry. Chaucer's silence was more agreeable than his conversation. Dryden's conversation was slow and dull, his humour saturnine and reserved. Corneille in conversation was so insipid that he never failed in wearying; he did not even speak correctly that language of which he was such a master. Ben Jonson used to sit silent in company, and suck his wine and their humours. Southey was stiff, sedate, and wrapped up in asceticism. Addison was good company with his intimate friends, but in mixed company he preserved his dignity by a stiff and reserved silence. Fox, in conversation, never flagged; his animation and variety were inexhaustible. Dr. Bentley was loquacious. Grotius was talkative. Goldsmith wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll. Burke was eminently entertaining, enthusiastic, and interesting in conversation. Curran was a convivial deity: he soared into every region, and was at home in all. Dr. Birch dreaded a pen as he did a torpedo; but he could talk like running water. Dr. Johnson wrote monotonously and ponderously, but in conversation his words were close and sinewy: and if his pistol missed fire, he knocked down his antagonist with the butt of it. Coleridge, in his conversation, was full of acuteness and originality. Leigh Hunt has been well termed the philosopher of hope, and likened to a pleasant stream in conversation. Carlyle doubts, objects, and constantly demurs. Fisher Ames was a powerful and effective orator, and not the less distinguished in the social circle: he possessed a fluent language, a vivid fancy, and a well-stored memory.*f*

25, 26. (25) **killeth him**, wasting away his life. His desire keeps him from health-bringing labour. Special diseases afflict the lazy and slothful. (26) **coveteth greedily**, *lit.* "every day he wisheth a wish."*a* **giveth**, by diligent labour he gains enough and to spare.*b*

Sloth (*vv.* 25, 26).—Solomon seems to attach to it here several evils. I. Suicide. Several things tend to kill such a man. 1. Ennui; 2. Disappointment; 3. Envy; 4. Poverty; 5. Remorse. II. Greed. III. Unrighteousness.*c*

Lore of work.—Mr. Fletcher accepted the living of Madeley in preference to another of more than double the value which was offered him about the same time, his previous intercourse with the people having excited within him an affection which would not suffer him to be separated from them, and which remained unabated till his death. The circumstances connected with his appointment were remarkable and characteristic. One day Mr. Hill informed him that the living of Dunham, in Cheshire, then vacant, was at his service. "The parish," he continued, "is small, the duty light, the income good (£400 per annum), and it is situated in a fine healthy sporting country." After thanking Mr. Hill most cordially for his kindness, Mr. Fletcher added, "Alas! sir, Dunham will not suit me: there is too much money and too little labour." "Few clergymen make such objections," said Mr. Hill: "it is a pity to decline such a living, as I do not know that I can find you another. What shall we do? Would you like Madeley?" "That, sir, would be the very place for me." "My object, Mr. Fletcher," rejoined Mr. Hill, "is to make you comfortable in your own way. If you prefer Madeley, I shall find no difficulty in persuading the present vicar to exchange it

of a pen behind the curtain, he concluded that his words were being taken down, and became more cautious. The recording angel takes down not our words only, but also our deeds and thoughts.

"O that delightful engine of her thoughts, that blabb'd them with such pleasing eloquence, is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage, where, like a sweet melodious bird, it sung sweet varied notes, enchanting every ear!" —*Shakespeare.*

e Southey.

f Chambers.

a "He carries constantly the same intense longing for possession and enjoyment, but stops with this indolent wishing and dreaming, without passing over into energetic action."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Eph. iv. 28.

c Dr. D. Thomas.

Long ago the birds have finished their matins, the sun has advanced full high, the dew has gone from the grass, and the labours of industry are far in progress, when our sluggard, awakened by his very efforts to maintain sleep, slowly emerges to perform life's great duty of feeding, with him second only in

importance to sleep.

d R. T. S.

a Jno. iii. 11; 2 Pe. i. 16—18.

v. 27. *T. Davies,* 308.

b Dr. D. Thomas.

"This I always religiously observed, as a rule, never to chide my husband before company, nor to prattle abroad of miscarriages at home. What passes between two people is much easier made up than when once it has taken air."—*Erasmus.*

"Some men are very entertaining for a first interview, but after that they are exhausted, and run out: on a second meeting we shall find them very flat and monotonous: like hand-organs, we have heard all their tunes."—*C. Colton.*

"I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth. I hate to see a load of bandboxes go along the street, and I hate to see a parcel of big words without anything in them."—*Hazlitt.*

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound, much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."—*Pope.*

c Chambers.

d Johnson.

for Dunham, which is worth more than twice as much." In this way he became vicar of Madeley, with which he was so perfectly satisfied, that he never afterwards sought honour or preferment.[d]

27, 28. (27) sacrifice, *etc.*, ch. xv. 8; Ps. l. 9. abomination, because a mere formality. with a wicked mind, hypocrisy being altogether worse than inconsistency. Sacrifice may be used to sanction sin, then it must be most hateful. (28) false witness, ch. xix. 5. 9. heareth, attends carefully, so as to be able to report accurately, and give true testimony. constantly, or for ever. His witness will never be put to shame.[a]

Moral qualities and their results (*vv.* 28, 29).—I. Falsehood and ruin. There are witnesses of lies in various departments of life. 1. In courts of justice; 2. In literary paths; 3. In social circles; 4. In religious teaching. II. Veracity and safety. III. Wickedness and effrontery. IV. Uprightness and self-control.[b]

Decay of conversation.—The ancient art of talking is falling into decay. It is an ascertainable fact that, in proportion to the increased population, the aggregate bulk of conversation is lessening. People nowadays have something else to do but talk; not only do they live in such a hurry that there is only leisure for just comparing ideas as to the weather, but they have each and all a gross quantity of reading to do, which puts talking out of the question. If persons remain at home, they read; if they go to the sea-side, they read; we have met misguided individuals out in the open fields with books in hand; young folks have been seen stretched underneath trees, and upon the banks of rivers, poring over the opened page; on the tops of mountains, in the desert, far within forests—everywhere, men now pull printed sheets from their pockets, and as the earliest, latest, highest occupation of this life, they read. The fact is incontestably true, that modern men and women are reading themselves into a comparatively silent race. Reading is the great delusion of the present time; it has become a sort of lay piety, according to which the perusal of volumes reckons as good works; it is, in a word, the superstition of the nineteenth century.[c]—*Styles of conversation.*—He that would please in company must be attentive to what style is most proper. The scholastic should never be used but in a select company of learned men. The didactic should seldom be used, and then only by judicious aged persons, or those who are eminent for piety or wisdom. No style is more extensively acceptable than the narrative, because this does not carry an air of superiority over the rest of the company, and therefore is most likely to please them: for this purpose we should store our memory with short anecdotes and entertaining pieces of history. Almost every one listens with eagerness to extemporary history. Vanity often co-operates with curiosity, for he that is a hearer in one place, wishes to qualify himself to be a principal speaker in some inferior company, and therefore more attention is given to narrations than anything else in conversation. It is true, indeed, that sallies of wit and quick replies are very pleasing in conversation, but they frequently tend to raise envy in some of the company; but the narrative way neither raises this, nor any other evil passion, but keeps all the company nearly upon an equality, and, if judiciously managed, will at once entertain and improve them all.[d]

29. **hardeneth his face,** is obstinate in his self-will. **directeth,** or considereth. He is willing to receive counsel. He acts advisedly.[a]

Sympathy with the poor.—Her Majesty, it is well known, has greatly endeared herself to the country people in the neighbourhood of Balmoral by going about among them, sending presents to some, and interesting herself in the circumstances of almost every one. It appears that a short time ago Her Majesty and the Prince, in the course of their walks in the neighbourhood of the castle, met a little boy whom they stopped and spoke to, inquiring whether he was at school, and what his parents were. It appeared that the little fellow's father is dead, and that his mother is in poor circumstances. Next day orders were given by Her Majesty for a suit of clothes to be sent to the boy, along with a Bible, in which his name was to be written.[b]

Benevolence.—

'Tis written with the pen of heavenly love
On every heart which skill Divine has moulded;
A transcript from the statute-book above,
Where angels read their Sovereign's will unfolded.

It bids us seek the holes where famine lurks,
Clutching the hoarded crust with trembling fingers,
Where toil in damp unwholesome caverns works,
Or with strained eyeballs o'er the needle lingers.

It bids us stand beside the dying bed
Of those about to quit the world for ever;
Smooth the toss'd pillow, prop the aching head,
Cheer the heart-broken, whom death hastes to sever.

And those who copy thus Christ's life on earth,
Feeding the poor, and comforting the weeper,
Will all receive a meed of priceless worth,
When ripely gather'd by the Heavenly Reaper.[c]

30, 31. (30) **against the Lord,** no resisting Him, so all life plans should be made in dependence on His will. "Wisdom that would assert itself in opposition to the Divine, is not wisdom, but sheer folly."[a] (31) **horse,** &c. type of warlike strength. Ps. xx. 7. **safety,** or victory.[b]

The sailor and the crocodile.—Campbell, the sailor, being at sea, felt one evening when near the shore a disposition to bathe. His companions would have dissuaded him from it, as they had recently seen several sharks; but being partly intoxicated, he would not listen to their persuasions. Nearly as soon as he was in the water, his companions saw an alligator directing his course towards him, and considered his escape from death totally impossible. They fired at the alligator, but in vain. Campbell became aware of his danger, and immediately made for the shore. On approaching within a short distance of some canes and shrubs that covered the bank, and while closely pursued by the alligator, a ferocious tiger sprung towards him, at the very instant he was about being devoured by his first enemy. The eager tiger overleaped him, fell into the grasp of the alligator, and, after a long struggle, was killed by him. Campbell was conveyed to his vessel, gratefully returned thanks to Providence which had preserved him, and from that period a marked change was observed in his character.[c]

a "There is a contrast intended bet. hardening himself, and hardening his way."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 29. *B. Carter,* 71.

"'All my goods to feed the poor.'—The true and most significant sense is, 'Though I dole away in mouthfuls all my property or estates.' Who that has witnessed the almsgiving in a Catholic monastery, or the court of a Spanish or Sicilian bishop's or archbishop's palace, where immense revenues are syringed away in farthings to herds of beggars, but must feel the force of the Apostle's half satirical expression?"—*Coleridge.*

b Whitecross.

c Household Words.

a O. Zöckler.

b Ps. lxviii. 20; Ho. xiv. 3; Ac. v. 39.

v. 30. *Bp. Wilson,* ii. 405; *J. Saurin,* v. 125.

vv. 30, 31. *Abp. Magee,* ii. 351.

v. 31. *Bp. Beveridge,* vii. 141.

"Man, know thyself! all wisdom centres there."—*Young.*

c Cheever.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1. good, this word is supplied from Ec. vii. 1. The value of *character* cannot be overestimated. than great riches, these may be good, but the good name is better. Sc. does not speak against riches, but it puts them into their right and subordinate place. loving favour, or as marg. "favour is better" etc. "Better than silver or gold is goodwill."

A good name (*v.* 1).—I. Explain what is meant by this particular phrase—"A good name." It means a good character. The name of Christian is a good name as far as the word goes; and this you have already. But it is no use to have a good name unless your name bespeak your character. II. Why a good name is better than riches. 1. It lasts for ever; 2. All good names are written in the Lamb's book of life.[a]—*A good name.*—Various pursuits of life. Some seek learning, others fame, others wealth; not many make "a good name" the great end of life; yet this is the best possession, as will appear if we compare the two and examine specially the superior excellence of the latter. I. Compare the two. The *getting:* no credit in inheriting riches, different methods of getting wealth, "hasting to be rich," etc.; good name got by right exercise of good qualities. The *keeping:* of wealth much anxiety, may provoke pride in us, envy in others, guarding often more troublesome than getting; good name yields constant satisfaction to its owner, will benefit all who strive to possess one. The *leaving:* wealth must be left to be fought for by those who survive, or perhaps be squandered; *good name* lasts for ever, "name of wicked perish, righteous in everlasting remembrance." II. Superiority of good name. Besides what is taught by the comparison, better to the owner; yields what wealth cannot; better to others, as moral influence of a good man will do more good than wealth of a bad man; better in last day. Without a good name (the name truly representing character) wealth may injure; with it riches may prove a blessing. Abraham, Job, etc., had both; but we think more of the good name than the wealth.[b]

Importance of character.—A fable.—Be wondrous wary of your first comportments; get a good name, and be very tender of it afterwards; for it is like the Venice glass, quickly cracked, never to be mended, though patched it may be. To this purpose, take along with you this fable. It happened that Fire, Water, and Fame went to travel together. They consulted that if they lost one another how they might be retrieved, and meet again. Fire said, "Where you see smoke, there you shall find me." Water said, "Where you see marsh, and moorish low ground, there you shall find me." But Fame said, "Take heed how you lose me; for, if you do, you will run a great hazard never to meet me again: there is no retrieving of me."[c]

2. meet together,[a] everywhere in life we find both. Cottage homes for the poor lie close behind the squares and mansions of the rich. maker . . all,[b] humanity is one, the relation of all to God overrides distinctions of rank. "Before the common relationship, all circumstantial distinctions vanish."

The equality of men (*v.* 2).—I. Clearly state the subject. II.

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v. 1. *R. Greenham*, 259; *Bp. Smallridge*, 439; *Dr. T. Coney*, iii. 17; *Abp. Secker*, v. 331; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 247; *Dr. S. Charters*, ii. 323.

a J. Maskell.

"Gentlemen, there has been no instance, and England is little likely to give the unexampled spectacle, of a country successful in the noble arts, yet in which the youths were frivolous, the maidens falsely religious, the men slaves of money, and the matrons of vanity. Not from all the marble of the hills of Luni will such a people ever shape one statue that may stand nobly against the sky; not from all the treasures bequeathed to them by the great dead will they gather, for their own descendants, any inheritance but shame."—*John Ruskin.*

b Hive.

"Talents are nurtured best in solitude, but character on life's tempestuous sea."—*Goethe.*

c Howell.

a Strike against, encounter each other. Not here used in an antagonistic sense.

b Ac. xvii. 25, 26, 28.

Show that it is the will of God that there should be distinctions of rich and poor in the world. 1. Evident from Scripture ; 2. It is not inconsistent with God's justice, and is an argument for His wisdom. III. Application. 1. The rich should acknowledge God in all their enjoyments ; 2. The poor should be contented ; 3. Apart from riches and poverty, all men are equal—they have the same nature, the same care of Providence, the same Christian privileges, the same judgment.[c]

Kings, princes, and statesmen.—When President Davies of America was in London, his fame as a pulpit orator reached the ears of King George II., who expressed a strong desire to hear him. This was brought about, and Mr. Davies preached before a splendid audience, composed of the royal family and many of the nobility. It is said that while Mr. Davies was preaching, the king was at different times seen speaking to those around him, who were observed to smile. This appearance of irreverence in the house of God caught the attention of the preacher. After pausing, and looking sternly in that direction several times, he proceeded in his discourse ; but the same conduct was still observed. The fearless preacher then exclaimed, "When the lion roars, the beasts of the forests tremble ; and when King Jesus speaks, the princes of the earth should keep silence!" The king is said to have given a significant but courteous bow to the preacher, and to have sat very composedly and reverently during the rest of the service. The king is said to have been enraptured with the preacher's manner and eloquence, and to have been expressing his delight to those around him. He sent for the preacher, who repeated his visit, and received from the king a handsome donation for the college.[d]

3. foreseeth, *comp.* ch. xxvii. 12. Foresight is an important practical quality. True wisdom is always associated with forecast.

Prudence.—Two friends happening to quarrel at a tavern, one of them insisted that the other should fight him next morning. The challenge was accepted on condition that they should breakfast together at the house of the person challenged, previous to their going to the field. When the challenger came in the morning, according to appointment, he found every preparation made for breakfast, and his friend with his wife and children ready to receive him. Their repast being ended, and the family withdrawn, without the least intimation of their purpose having transpired, the challenger asked the other if he was ready to attend? "No, sir," said he, "not till we are more on a par : that amiable woman, and those six lovely children, who just now breakfasted with us, depend, under Providence, on my life for subsistence ; and till you can stake something equal in my estimation to the welfare of seven persons dearer to me than the apple of my eye, I cannot think we are equally matched." "We are not indeed!" replied the other, giving him his hand. They became firmer friends than ever.—*The boy in the coal-pit.*—A short time since, there was a dreadful explosion in one of the coal-pits in Derbyshire. One boy of about twelve was missing for some time, several men were injured for life, and some were burnt to death on the spot. Search was made for the boy, and his name was called along the roads in the pit. At length they came to the place where he was last seen ; the ass he was driving

2. *Dr. P. Du Moulin*, 139 ; *Dr. J. Cenant*, i. 219 ; *B. Newton*, i. 299 ; *J. Saurin*, iii. 69 ; *T. Pyle*, i. 87 ; *Bp. Butler*, 194 ; *Bp. Conybeare*, i. 189 ; *T. White*, 283 ; *T. Skeeler*, 151 ; *Dr. J. Lawson*, 83 ; *Dr. J. Jortin*, i. 77 ; *A. Macdonald*, 139 ; *Bp. R. Watson*, i. 448 ; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 586 ; *R. Nares*, 184 ; *R. Hall*, vi. 325 ; *Bp. Maltby*, 270 ; *G. D. Hill*, 40 ; *E. Bather*, iii. 452 ; *W. Gresley*, 1 ; *J. W. Warter*, i. 119.

c *H. Grove* (1742).

The wise man is instructed by reason and is enriched by faith—the fool is taught by necessity and pays little heed to experience.

d *Whitecross.*

v. 3. *T. Horton*, 259 ; *R. P. Buddicom*, 2.

James I. once said of armour, that "it was an excellent invention, for it not only saved the life of the wearer, but it hindered him from doing harm to anybody else." Equally destructive to all usefulness is that excessive prudence upon which some professors pride themselves ; not only do they escape all persecution, but they are never able to strike a blow, much less fight a battle for the Lord Jesus.

"As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear ; but returns,

as it declines from the ear to the eye."—*Johnson.*

a Comp. Pr. iii. 16, viii. 18.

Selden says—"Humility is a virtue all preach, none practise, and yet everybody is content to hear. The master thinks it good doctrine for the servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity."

Alcibiades was boasting one day of his estates. Socrates took a map and bade him point out Attica. It was found, though small. "Now point out your estates." "They are too small to be distinguished," was the reply. "See, then," said the philosopher, "how much you are affected about an imperceptible point of land!"

"Of trees I observe God hath chosen the vine, a low plant which creeps upon the helpful wall; of all beasts, the soft and patient lamb; of all fowls, the mild and gall-less dove. To be humble to our superiors is duty; to our equals, courtesy; to our inferiors, generosity."—*Feltham.*

"We should often have reason to be ashamed of our most brilliant actions if the world could see the motives from which they spring."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

lay dead, and the boy was alive and well in a hole. He said: "I was driving the ass, when I saw a blue blaze coming along the road, and thinking all was not right, I crept into this hole, and here I am, quite safe."

4. by humility, *marg.* "The reward of humility." Omit *and;* read "wh. is the fear of the Lord." Genuine humility is the result of the fear of God.[a]

True humility.—True humility is not a cringing prostration of the soul before another man, because he is rich, or great, or learned, or noble, or royal. Nor is that humility which cringes and prostrates itself before the saints and the Virgin Mary, and has constructed the gigantic corporation headed by the hierarchy of the Church of Rome. True humility courts not the smile (though it is thankful when it has it) of the great, and it fears not their frown. It leans not upon the mighty, because it leans upon the Lord. It bows itself to the dust before the least word from heaven; it stands erect in its conscious quality before the mightiest of human kind. Humility has often been arrayed in the most grotesque, in the most extravagant and ridiculous garbs. The mere ape of it has lived in solitudes, and perched for years upon lofty pillars, dwelt in dark caves, and worn hair-cloth dresses, has mutilated the body, starved and stinted the flesh, muttered long prayers, gone on weary pilgrimages, and passed the night in wearisome vigils, and all the while looked around if anybody was admiring so wonderful a model of humility before God and man. This is the mockery of it, the hypocrisy that assumes its guise, not the reality. This is the very humility that has gathered the faggots, kindled the flames, burned the saints; that has scourged Europe with religious wars, pronounced conscience a crime, reason a folly; that has declared the child's smile was sin if it occurred upon the Sabbath, and that the expression of the young heart—its loud and merry laughter—was inconsistent with real and true religion. This is the mockery, the forgery, the pretence, not the reality. True humility is of another stamp. It calls no man master, and seems to worldly men to be pride, but it is only its deep deference to God that enables it to set man in his own lowly place. True humility prefers mercy to sacrifice; does good and is silent; bears suffering and is patient; rises above schoolmen, priest, and tradition: looks to Christ, sits at His feet, and learns only from Him. True humility will bid the priest, the Church, the minister, and the schoolmen remain, as Abraham his servants, at the bottom of the mount, while it rises to the loftiest crag of that mount, and deals alone with God, and holds communion with Him only. True humility counts holiness far more splendid than robes and phylacteries, prefers beneficence to ceremony, lives a divine life, and is not satisfied with merely talking about it and praising it. It wears not a hair-cloth shirt, nor whines when it speaks, nor puts on a sour and repulsive countenance, nor fancies that God can only be approached, and religion spoken of, in sepulchral tones. But it does not seem to men to fast. It fasts before God. There is nothing of display and parade that would indicate it was of earth, everything to prove that it is implanted within from its Father in heaven. The kingdom of God is not meat, nor drink, nor phylactery, nor robe, nor rite, nor ceremony, nor outward appearance, nor peculiar tone, nor strange conduct; but it is righteous-

ness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Do not affect humility. The moment humility is spoken of by him that has it, that moment it is gone. It is like those delicate things which dissolve the instant they are touched. You must seek out the violet; it does not, like the poppy, thrust itself upon your notice. The moment humility tells you "I am here," there is an end to it.[b]

5. **thorns and snares**, fig. of the perils of life. **froward**, set in contrast with the man of humility who fears the Lord. "He is the man of unbridled will, stubborn and headstrong."[a] **keep his soul**, by due watchings and self-restraints.[b]

Christian watchfulness.—As the sentinel on duty watches for the coming foe; as the sailor on deck watches for the coming danger from storm or breakers; as the watchman watches for the thief who seeks to plunder; as Satan watches for opportunities to sow tares, and ruin souls; as the worldling watches for "chances" to make a bargain; as the pleasure taker watches for seasons, times, and companies for personal enjoyment; as the lover of knowledge watches all openings for the increasing of his knowledge: so should the Christian watch for the approach of his enemies, and be prepared for conflict and victory. He should watch for the dangers which beset his passage to the haven of rest, and, by the wisdom which cometh from above, avoid them: he should watch for all occasions of usefulness in all ways in his power; for all opportunities of laying up treasure in heaven; for all means of promoting his purity and happiness; for all sources whence may flow an increase in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. "What I say unto one, I say unto all, watch." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[c]—*The snare of evil companions.*—Cooke, who was executed for a very awful murder at Leicester, in his confession to the town clerk, alluded to being connected with a society, formed principally of deistical young men, who frequented a public house in that town, in which the writings of Paine, Carlile, and other infidel authors were taken in and encouraged. He emphatically added, "I considered myself a moral young man, attending, as I did, some place of Christian worship three times a day: till, unhappily, I got connected with the above and other infidel associations."[d]

6. **train**, initiate: press into, and so educate. "The development of the intellectual and moral powers of the soul." **a child**, training must begin then. Childhood is the period in wh. life impressions are received.[a] **way . . go**, "according to the standard of his way;" the path marked out for him. The way he *should* go, not the way he *would* go.[b] **not depart**, bec. early habits gain fixedness for life.

To parents (*v.* 6).—I. The duty. Train them—1. Early; 2. Intellectually: 3. Morally; 4. Religiously. II. The manner in which the duty is to be performed. 1. By precept; 2. Example; 3. Discipline; 4. Education. III. Encouragements for its discharge. A regard to the happiness of—1. The child; 2. The parents; 3. Society.[c]—*Education.*—I. The philosophy of education. 1. The susceptibility of childhood; 2. The durability of impressions. II. The art of education. 1. The discipline of the will; 2. Of the conscience. III. The religion of education. 1. Right views of God; 2. Obedience to His will; 3. Love of His character.[d]

b Dr. Cumming.

a "Self-willed stubbornness has always led men into perplexities."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b "Let him that would be little in temptation be much in prayer. True prayer strikes at the root of all sin, and by it our souls are preserved safe in God's keeping."—*Quoted by Nicholls.*

Je. xxiii. 12, 13; 1 Jno. v. 18.

c Bate.

"There is small chance of truth at the goal where there is not a childlike humility at the starting post."—*Coleridge.*

d R. T. S.

a "Comp. German proverbs, 'Young accustomed is done old.' 'What *little* Johnnie does not learn, Johnnie learns never.' And the familiar Eng. prov., 'Just as the twig is bent the tree is inclined.'"—*O. Zöckler.*

b "The Prov. enjoins the closest possible study of each child's temperament, and

the adaptation of his 'way of life' to that."—*Spk. Com.*

"Of all the men we meet with, nine parts out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education."—*Locke.*

La. iii. 27; Eph. vi. 4; 2 Ti. iii. 15.

v. 6. *Dr. W. Hopkins*, 345; *Dr. H. Burton*, ii. 413; *P. Newcom*, i. 1; *Dr. R. South*, v. 5; *Abp. Tillotson*, iv. 3; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, ii. 1; *J. Wesley*, vii. 86; *Dr. W. Paley*, i. 280; *T. Dwight*, iv. 98; *Ed. Irving*, 231; *H. Melvill*; *Syd. Smith*, 237; *Dr. W. F. Hook*, 192.

c G. Brooks.

d W. W. Whythe.

e Doddridge.

a "It should be our endeavour to keep as much as may be out of debt. Some sell their liberty to gratify their luxury."—*Mat. Henry.* Mat. xviii. 25; see De. xxviii. 12.

b Ill-gotten gains will not prosper. "Such was Sennacherib in olden time, such was Napoleon in our own day. Never had the world so extensive a sower of iniquity, never one reaped a more abundant harvest of vanity. The rod of anger was he to the nations of the earth. But how utterly was the rod suffered to fail, when the purpose was ac

Advice to parents.—Be very solicitous that others may be brought to a care about the one thing needful. If it be needful for you, it is so for your children, your friends, your servants. Let them, therefore, see your concern in this respect for them, as well as for yourselves. Let parents, especially, attend to this exhortation, whose care for their offspring often exceeds in other respects, and fails in this. Remember that your children may never live to enjoy the effects of your labour and concern to get them estates and portions. The charges of their funerals may perhaps be all their share of what you are so anxiously careful to lay up for them. And, oh! think what a sword would pierce through your very heart, if you should stand by the corpse of a beloved child with this reflection, "This poor creature has done with life before it learnt its great business in it, and is gone to eternity, which I have seldom been warning it to prepare for, and which, perhaps, it learnt of me to forget."[e]—*Influence of parental piety.*—In a certain village there were ninety-eight settled families having children over ten years of age. In twenty-seven of them both parents were pious! In these twenty-seven families there were one hundred and twenty-five children over ten years old. Eighty-four, or about two-thirds of these children, were pious. In nineteen of the ninety-eight families only one of the parents—the mother, with a single exception—was pious. Of the ninety-five children they contained, thirty-one—one-third—were pious. In the remaining fifty-two families neither parent was pious! Of their one hundred and thirty-nine children only thirteen, not one-tenth, were pious. These facts, the fruit of careful investigation, strikingly illustrate the immense power of parental influence for good or ill. Piety in both parents won two-thirds of their little ones to Christ: in one parent, one-third; where no piety existed, only one-tenth (and they were saved by the Sunday school) were lovers of God!

7, 8. (7) **ruleth over**, actually gives him who possesses it an authority over others. **servant**, is under obligation to him, and so must beg and serve.[a] (8) **soweth**, *etc.*, comp. Job vi. 1—8; Ga. vi. 7, 8. **vanity**, or calamity.[b] **fail**, trans. "the staff of his haughtiness vanisheth away." "Abused power will not last," marg. "shall be consumed."[e]

The social rule of wealth (*v.* 7).—I. This rule should always be a generous one. II. It is frequently tyrannie. III. It is ever temporary. Apply:—We are reminded—1. Of the responsibility of the rich; 2. Of the temptation of the poor; 3. Of the wisdom of the diligent.[d]

Advantages of wealth.—Wealth is an application of mind to nature; and the art of getting rich consists not in industry, much less in saving, but in a better order, in timeliness, in being at the right spot. One man has stronger arms or longer legs: another sees by the course of streams the growth of markets, where land will be wanted, makes a clearing to the river, goes to sleep, and wakes up rich. Steam is no stronger now than it was a hundred years ago; but it is put to better use. A clever fellow was acquainted with the expansive force of steam; he also saw the wealth of wheat and grass rotting in Michigan. Then he cunningly screws on the steam-pipe to the wheat crop. Puff now, O steam! The steam puffs and expands as before, but this time it is dragging all Michigan at its back to hungry New York and

hungry England. Coal lay in ledges under the ground since the Flood, until a labourer, with pick and windlass brings it to the surface. We may well call it black diamonds. Every basket is power and civilisation. For coal is a portable climate. It carries the heat of the tropics to Labrador and the polar circle ; and it is the means of transporting itself whithersoever it is wanted. Watt and Stephenson whispered in the ear of mankind their secret, that a half ounce of coal will draw two tons a mile ; and coal carries coal, by rail and by boat, to make Canada as warm as Calcutta, and with its comforts bring its industrial power.[e]

complished ! despoiled of empire, shorn of greatness, an exiled captive." —*Bridges.*

c Isa. i. 28.

v. 8. *T. Dorrington*, i. 152.

d Dr. D. Thomas.

e Emerson.

9. beautiful eye, *Heb.* "good of eye ;" see "evil eye," ch. xxviii. 22 : who looks round in kindness and friendliness ;[a] is of a beneficent disposition. **be blessed,** "charity being twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who takes."

Genuine philanthropy (*v.* 9).—I. The kindliness of its disposition, "a bountiful eye." II. The beneficence of its activity. III. The reward of its service. 1. He shall be blessed with the commendation of his own conscience ; 2. With the grateful affection of the poor ; 3. With the approbation of God.[b]

Christian sympathy.—An instance of the late Dr. M'Crie's sympathy with his people, and of the noble disinterestedness which all along distinguished him, is recorded by his biographer, which deserves to be mentioned. His congregation, knowing his difficulties, proposed in 1798, a year in which provisions were high, some addition to his stipend. No sooner did the report come to his ears, than he addressed to them an affectionate letter, in which he declined accepting of the proposed augmentation, and urged upon his flock the diligent improvement of the means of grace. "I would wish," said he, "to rejoice in my stipend, as one of the fruits of my preaching among you ; but the consideration of this being a burden to you would deprive me of this joy, and even hurt me in the exercise of my ministry, Go on, my brethren, in your regular attendance on the ordinances of Christ ; abound yet more and more in the fruits of righteousness ; let me have joy in beholding your good order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ ; and every other thing shall, in due time, be added to me." A year or two afterwards, in a season of great scarcity, he even formally proposed to give up a portion of his stipend ; an offer, however, which his attached flock did not accept. Such instances of disinterestedness on his part raised him still higher in his people's affection, and to the end of his life they generously and honourably provided for his support and comfort.[c]

a "An eye that seeks out objects of charity, besides those that offer themselves ; an eye that, upon the sight of one in want and misery, affects the heart with compassion ; an eye that, with the alms, gives a pleasant look, wh. makes the alms doubly acceptable."—*Mat. Henry.*

Ps. xli. 1; Is. xxxii. 8, lviii. 10, 11.

b Dr. D. Thomas.

"Like the sea anemone, which feels the first returning wave upon the rock, and throws out all its tendrils, so the tender nature of some individuals will give forth all its sympathies at the slightest intimation of human woe."—*Rev. John Everett.*

c Whitecross.

10, 11. (10) **scorner,** or scoffer, as ch. xxi. 24. Such a man excites others to contention, therefore he should be chased away.[a] (11) **pureness of heart,** or better, "with a pure heart, whose lips are gracious." **king . . friend,** *i.e.* such a man is sure to win favour and acceptance. Such a man "stands fair for preferment."

The law of kindness.—The two scholars.—"There. now, the bell rings ; and I'll be off !" said Charles B. to his playmate ; "and you may gather up the marbles, and put away the tools." "Now, Charles, don't go, pray don't. If you leave me, I shall be too late, and the door will be shut, and I shall be fined." "Fined ! you paltry little miser, and what care I for that ?" and off he scampered as fast as his legs could carry him. From another part of the

a "Scorners foster strife by their taunts and revilings."—*Fausset.*

Ps. ci. 6 ; Mat. v. 8.

v. 11. *Dr. J. Donne*, vi. 99.

"One great reason why men practise generosity so little in the world is their finding so little

there. Generosity is catching; and if so many escape it it is, in a small degree, for the same reason that countrymen escape the small-pox—because they meet with no one to give it to them."—*Greville.*

"Whatever mitigates the woes or increases the happiness of others is a just criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, is a criterion of iniquity. One should not quarrel with a dog without a reason sufficient to vindicate one through all the courts of morality."—*Goldsmith.*

b Not a Minute to Spare.

same playground ran a number of boys, amongst whom was a fine tall lad, who, in passing, saw little Harry's distress. "What's the matter, my little fellow?" "Oh! Fred, Charles and I were at play together; and he has left me to gather up all the marbles, and to put the tools away. He said he could 'not spare a minute' to help me, and I know I shan't be in time, and master will be so angry, and fine me." "Never mind, Harry! I'll help you; and we'll soon scramble up the marbles, and be in time, too; and if not, I'll pay half your fine, and my own into the bargain. Come, cheer up!" The two boys made haste, and reached the schoolroom door just before it was finally closed. Fred had always time to spare for kind actions, and money to spare for generous ones. Charles had neither time nor money for any but himself. Fred had a pious and judicious father, and an equally devoted mother, whose only care had been to train up their son in the fear of God, and in kindness and beneficence to all around him. That morning he had repeated to his father at the breakfast-table, as his texts for the day: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men," Gal. vi. 10; and "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted," Ephes. iv. 32. Fred thought of his texts when he saw his little schoolfellow in trouble. Charles, too, had a father; but a far different man. He boasted of his son's fine spirit, and prognosticated from it something great in the future man. But what kind of spirit did he manifest? He was disobedient to his mother, teasing to his sisters, unkind to his schoolfellows, gave trouble to the servants. His spirit, on which his father built his hopes, was, in fact, an evil spirit, far removed from the spirit of the only perfect Man, who was also perfect God, "the man Christ Jesus." The boy grew up to be a godless, selfish, overbearing young man; a grief to his parents. What in childhood they had laughed at they were now left to mourn over. They had spared no time to train him in his early years. He now spared none to seek to add to their happiness. How true is God's word!—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7.[b]

12. **preserve knowledge**, or "exercise a protecting superintendence over those who possess His knowledge."[a] "Secure protection to him who possesses and evinces true discernment and knowledge."[b] **overthroweth**, ch. xxi. 12. **words**, *i.e.* proposals or plans.[c]

Pursuit of knowledge under difficulties.—Young Morison and the "Evangelical Magazine."—The following incident is related of the youthful days of Dr. John Morison, for many years editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, and minister at Brompton:—When only nine years old he used to travel monthly to the town of Banff for the new number of the *Evangelical Magazine*. The distance was nine miles, and through the uncertain arrival of the sailing packet which brought it, he had sometimes to go twice, sometimes three times, before he obtained it. Often had he carried his shoes and stockings in his hand, and walked barefoot till he reached the bridge which spans the Daveron. And there, washing his feet, he would put himself in proper condition to appear in the streets of Banff. Before reaching home he had often read every word in the magazine but the advertisements. When tired of reading as he walked he would sit down by the roadside and continue the perusal till he had finished it.

a Dav. Thomas, D.D.
b O. Zöckler.
2 Chr. xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 15.
c "He defeats all the counsels and designs of false and treacherous men, and turns them to their own confusion."—*Mat. Henry.*
"Cities shall fall, kingdoms shall come to nothing, empires shall fade away as the smoke, but the truth of the Lord shall continue for ever. Burn it, it will rise again; kill it, it will live again; cut it down by the root, it will spring up

And thus, we may add, he had won an early though unknown title to take his place among the foremost friends of the *Evangelical Magazine.*

13. **slothful man,** *comp.* ch. xii. 24, etc.[a] **lion without,** this is given as a type of the unreasonable and frivolous excuses he gives for his laziness. **in the streets,** "in a city full of men, so timid is he."[b]

The characteristics of laziness (*v.* 13).—Indolence—I. Creates false excuses—1. In the secular sphere; 2. In the spiritual sphere. II. It creates unmanly excuses. Apply:—To true souls difficulties are a challenge, not a check to action.[c]

The disease of laziness.—As I was sitting with some senators of Bruges, before the gate of the senate house, a certain beggar presented himself to us, who, with sighs and tears and lamentable gestures, expressed to us his miserable poverty, saying, withal, that he had about him a private disorder, which shame prevented him from discovering to the eyes of men. We all, pitying the case of the poor man, gave him each of us something, and he departed. One amongst us sent his servant after him, with command to inquire of him what his private infirmity might be which he was so loth to discover. The servant overtook him, and desired of him that satisfaction, and having diligently viewed his face, breast, arms, etc., and finding all his limbs in good plight: "I see nothing," said he, "whereof you have any such reason to complain." "Alas!" said the beggar, "the disease that afflicts me is far different from what you conceive of, and is such as you cannot see; it is an evil that hath crept over my whole body; it is passed through the very veins and marrow of me in such a manner that there is no one member of my body that is able to do any work; this is by some called idleness, or sloth."[d]

Sloth.—

> Sloth lay till mid-day, turning on his couch,
> Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge;
> And having rolled him out, with much ado,
> And many a dismal sigh, and vain attempt,
> He sauntered out, accoutred carelessly—
> With half-ope'd, misty, unobservant eye,
> Somniferous, that weighed the object down
> On which its burden fell—an hour or two;
> Then with a groan retired to rest again.[e]

14, 15. (14) **mouth,** or flattering things that come forth of their mouth. **strange women,** Pr. ii. 16. **pit,**[a] such as was prepared for ensnaring wild animals. **fall therein,** in the wrath and judgment of the Lord.[b] (15) **foolishness,** the wilfulness of ignorance and inexperience. **bound,** *i.e.* firmly fixed, so as to need chastisement for its removal. In all children there is the liability, the tendency, the habit of going wrong: in this lies the truth of human depravity. **rod,** *etc.*, not necessarily corporal punishment. The word is used as a fig. for all the redemptive influence of wise parental chastisement.[c]

An evil and its cure (*v.* 15).—I. Here we have a terrible evil. 1. In its deprivation of goodness in its first stages; 2. The abnormal condition of parents; 3. The corrupt social influence under which the child is trained. II. A severe cure. These

again. No force shall be able to decay it. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—*Bp. Jewell.*

a Pr. xii. 27, xv. 19, xviii. 9, xix. 24, xxi. 25, etc. Mat. xxv. 26; Ro. xii. 11; He. vi. 12.

b Wordsworth.

"He has recourse to the most senseless and ludicrous excuses, if in any way he may not be obliged to go out to labour."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Idleness is the great Pacific Ocean of life, and in that stagnant abyss the most salutary things produce no good, the most obnoxious no evil. Vice, indeed, abstractedly considered, may be, and often is, engendered in idleness; but the moment it becomes sufficiently vice, it must quit its cradle, and cease to be idle."—*Colton.*

c Dr. D. Thomas.

d Camerarius

e Pollok.

a Ch. xxiii. 27.

b Comp. provs., "Whom the gods would destroy they first dement." "Men's pleasant vices are made whips to scourge them."

Ec. vii. 26.

c "Pain, administered by love, is the Divine rod to bring out depravity from the heart. Pain is a strong breeze

that bears away the chaff fr. the grains of virtue; the gale that urges the bark away from the shores of depravity and vice; the chisel by wh. the Divine Sculptor cuts out fr. the rough and shapeless stone an image of beauty fit for the halls of heaven." —*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

d Dr. D. Thomas.

Replying to scurrility is like the dandy keeping himself clean by pushing away the chimney sweeper.

e Harmer.

words suggest—1. The infliction of pain; 2. But from a benevolent disposition.[d]

An illustration of v. 15.—Maundrell, describing the passage out of the jurisdiction of the Bashaw of Aleppo into that of him of Tripoli, tells us the road was rocky and uneven, but attended with variety. "Sometimes it led us under the cool shade of thick trees; sometimes through narrow valleys, watered with fresh murmuring torrents: and then for a good while together upon the brink of a precipice; and in all places it treated us with the prospect of plants and flowers of divers kinds,—as myrtles, oleanders, cyclamens, etc. Having spent about two hours in this manner, we descended into a low valley, at the bottom of which is a fissure into the earth of a great depth, but withal so narrow that it is not discernible to the eye till you arrive just upon it, though to the ear a notice of it is given at a great distance, by reason of the noise of a stream running down into it from the hills. We could not guess it to be less than thirty yards deep; but it is so narrow that a small arch, not four yards over, lands you on its other side. They call it the 'Sheik's Wife;' a name given to it from a woman of that quality who fell into it and, I need not add, perished." May not Solomon refer to some such dangerous place as this, when he says, "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein." The flowery pleasures of the place where this fatal pit was make the allusion still more striking. How agreeable to sense the path that led to this chamber of death![e]

a So *Zöckler.*

b "The ill-gotten gains do not prosper, and only expose the oppressor to extortion and violence in his turn."—*Spk. Com.*

Lu. vi. 33—35.

v. 16. *J.C.Knowles,* 123.

"I take him to be the truly rich man that lives upon what he has, owes nothing, and is contented; for there is no determinate sum of money, nor quantity of estate, that can make a man rich, since no man is truly rich that has not so much as perfectly satiates his desire of having more; for the desire of more is want, and want is poverty." —*Howe.*

Ruskin

16. **increase**, *etc.*, it is doubtful whether is here meant *his own* riches, or the *poor man's* riches. It may be that the oppressions of the rich man are regarded as stirring up the poor man to activity, so that he may rise out of his position of dependence,[a] **to want**, the man gives only to increase the riches which the man is squandering, so in giving him opportunity for his vices really hurries on his ruin.[b]

Abuse of wealth.—I am no advocate for meanness of private habitation. I would fain introduce into it all magnificence, care, and beauty, where they are possible; but I would not have that useless expense in unnoticed fineries or formalities,—cornicing of ceilings, and graining of doors, and fringing of curtains, and thousands of such things,—which have become foolishly and apathetically habitual; things on which by common appliance hang whole trades, to which there never belonged the blessing of giving one ray of real pleasure, or becoming of the remotest or most contemptible use; things which cause half the expense of life, and destroy more than half its comfort, manliness, respectability, freshness, and facility. I speak from experience: I know what it is to live in a cottage with a deal floor and roof, and a hearth of mica-slate: and I know it to be in many respects healthier and happier than living between a Turkey carpet and a gilded ceiling, beside a steel grate and polished fender. I do not say that such things have not their place and propriety; but I say this emphatically, that a tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic comforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively afforded and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England.[c]

17—19. (17) bow, *etc.*, the beginning of a new portion of the book: this verse contains the usual general exhortation.[a] (18) within thee, in thine heart, or inward parts. fitted, or fixed. lips, one form of expression for the inward life of obedience to God. God asks belief with the heart and confession with the lip and the life. (19) made known, by these instructions. even to thee, so its application is personal and individual.

Spiritual verities (*vv.* 17—21).—The subject of these verses is spiritual verities, called excellent things. I. The experimental knowledge of them is a transcendent blessing. 1. It affords pleasure; 2. Enriches speech: 3. Inspires trust in God; 4. Establishes the faith of the soul; 5. Qualifies for usefulness. II. This knowledge is attainable. The method involves—1. Communication; 2. Attention; 3. Application; 4. Retention. Apply:—(1) Get this knowledge; (2) There is no time to lose; (3) Get it for yourself.[b]

Aspirations after knowledge.—

Look, the world tempts our eye,
And we would know it all.
We map the starry sky,
We mine this earthen ball,
We measure the sea-tides, we number the sea-sands:
We scrutinise the dates
Of long-past human things,
The bounds of effaced states,
The lives of deceased kings:
We search out dead men's words, and works of dead men's hands.[c]

The knowledge of Christ.—Here is the privilege of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that as it is of eminence and height, so it is of use and convenience, and that in the highest measure; as it is a pearl for beauty, so it is for value. This knowledge is a kind of catholicon, of universal use and convenience. It is so in reference to this life. Am I in want, in contempt, in prison, in banishment, in sickness, in death? This knowledge gives me contentedness, patience, cheerfulness, resignation of myself to His will, who hath sealed my peace with Him, and favour from Him, in the great covenant of His Son; and I can live upon this though I were ready to starve. I am assured that if it be for my good and the glory of His name, I shall be delivered; if not, I can be contented, so that my jewel, the peace of God, and my own conscience by the blood of Christ, be safe. Am I in wealth, honour, power, greatness, esteem in the world? This knowledge teacheth me humility, as knowing from whom I received it; fidelity, as knowing to whom I must account for it; watchfulness, as knowing that the honour of my Lord is concerned in some measure in my conduct: and that the higher the employment is the more obnoxious I am to temptation from without, from them that watch for my halting, and from within by a deceitful heart. And in all it teacheth me not to overvalue my condition; nor to value myself the more by it or for it, because the knowledge of Christ Jesus presents me with an object of a higher value, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. It teacheth me to look upon the glory of the world as rust, in comparison of the glory that excelleth, and that the greatest of men

a Comp. Pr. iii. 1, 21, iv. 1, vii. 1.

v. 19. *T. Emlyn*, iii. 179.

b Dr. D. Thomas.

It is related of Grotius, the great scholar, that on his death-bed he exclaimed, "Ah, I have consumed my life in a laborious doing of nothing! I would give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick!" This John Urick was a religious poor man, who spent eight hours of the day in reading and prayer, eight in labour, and only eight in sleep and meals.

c Arnold.

"By its own members: man, alas! alone; the recreant spirit of the universe, loves surface knowledge; calls the crimes of crowds virtue; adores the useful vices; licks the gory dust from off the feet of war, and swears it food for gods, though fit for fiends only; reversing just the devil's state, when first he entered on this orb of man's—a fallen angel's form, a reptile's soul."—*Bailey.*

"Evermore it must be remembered, that the least part of knowledge passed to man by this so large a charter from God, must be subject to that

use for which God hath granted it, which is the benefit and relief of the state and society of man; for otherwise all manner of knowledge becometh malign and serpentine, and therefore, as carrying the quality of the serpent's sting and malice, it maketh the mind of man to swell." —*Bacon.*

"Ignorance is the curse of God, knowledge the wing with which we fly to heaven." —*Shakespeare.*

d Hale.

v. 21. *J. J. Conybeare, Bamp. Lec.* i. "All knowledge, however imposing in appearance, is but superficial knowledge, if it be merely the mind's furniture, and not the mind's nutriment. It must be transmuted into mind, as food into blood, in order to become wisdom and power. Many of the generals opposed to Napoleon understood military science as well as he did, but he beat them on every occasion where victory depended on a wise movement made at a moment's thought, because science had been transfused into his mind, while to theirs it was only attached." —*Whipple.*

s R. Watson.

t Job v. 4, xxxi. 21; Ps. lxix. 12, cxxvii. 5.

is a worm in comparison with the great God. And as thus, in reference to the temporal condition of my life, this knowledge of Christ is of singular use, and makes a man a better philosopher than the best system of morals, in reference thereunto; so it guides me in the management of all relations. 1. To God; presenting Him unto me as full of majesty, yet full of love, which teacheth me reverence and yet access with boldness, love, and obedience. 2. To man; enjoining justice, which is giving every man his due, mercy to forgive, compassion to pity, liberality to relieve, sobriety in the use of creatures and yet comfort in the enjoying of them, a right use of the world and yet a contempt of it in comparison of my hope. It makes death not terrible, because a most sure passage to life. I find a way to get all my sins pardoned, whereas, without this all the world cannot contrive a satisfaction for one; I find a way to obtain such a righteousness as is valuable with God, and perfect before Him, even the righteousness of God in Christ. And here I find the means, and only means, to avoid the wrath to come, the terror of the judgment of the great day, and to secure everlasting life unto all eternity with the blessed God and our Lord Jesus Christ and all the blessed angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Thus this knowledge is useful for this life, and that which is to come, and that in the highest degree, which all other knowledge comes short of, and attains not to any one of the least of these ends.[d]

20, 21. (20) **excellent things,** Heb. *shalishim*, third, **or** "chief of three warriors in a chariot:" hence meaning "chief, principal, excellent." (21) **answer,** *etc.*, Sol.'s teachings were given to his son in order to fit him for his future position as king.

The pleasure of Scriptural knowledge.—Of the pleasure which springs from knowledge, and especially from that knowledge which the Holy Scriptures communicate, we cannot conceive too highly. To know God, to contemplate the perfections of His nature, and the wonders of His hand; to become acquainted with that regular and orderly plan by which He governs His creatures; to observe His watchful care and providential regard; to behold the wonders of redemption, the character and undertaking of Jesus, the doctrine He hath taught, the duties He hath enforced, the promises He hath given; to discover the means of salvation, the economy of the invisible world, and the continuance of our own existence in that immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel;—these and many other subjects of equal importance, when opened to the mind, not only give pleasure as speculative discoveries and the solutions of distressing doubts, but by awakening virtuous sentiments, kindling an ardent and elevated devotion, giving support and reasonableness to hope, and influencing to the discharge of every religious and moral duty, produce also the testimony of a good conscience, and the favour of God, the present possession of the peace of the Gospel, and the prospect of a future fulness of joy in the presence of God for ever.[s]

22—25. (22) **because . . poor,** his poverty not permitting him to defend himself at law. Or, let pity for his poverty keep thee from injuring him. **in the gate,** where was usually the

place of judgment.[a] (23) spoil the soul, He will repay the oppressor by spiritual judgments. (24) angry, or passionate man. Lit. *an owner of rage:* "of a nose snorting with fury." (25) prepare a snare, by copying the evil example. We usually catch the temper of those with whom we mostly associate.

The rights of man (*vv.* 22, 23).—Quote some case in which the rights of the poor have been attempted to be disturbed, and in which the attempt failed. I. The Bible and spiritual tyranny are, in their nature, reciprocally antagonistic. The Bible is man's patrimony. Rome would deprive man of the Bible. II. As Rome serves for a specimen of spiritual, Russia may serve as a specimen of political, despotism. III. The Bible is the enemy of social tyranny, and therefore the friend of social liberty.[b]

An African prince.— Some years since a young African prince, named Pippin, came to England. A few days before the assizes he was taken to examine one of our large county jails: it was unusually full, and in the castle yard were a group of men uttering the most profane language. The prince heard them, and turned away in disgust. He had been taught to despise the reckless profanity he had previously seen on board ship, and which was now repeated in prison. Shortly after, he was introduced as a visitor to a large assembly; some gentlemen were overheard by him swearing, and using vulgar language among themselves. Pippin immediately rose from his seat, with the air of a prince, and advancing towards the middle of the room, all eyes upon him in an instant, he spake nearly as follows:—"Ladee and gentlemens, I go de jail, hearee dee mens wid chain on leggee swearee: I no likee dat, so I come away. Some of de same mens come here wid tickets; why letee in? I no likee that, so go away." So saying, he bowed to the ladies with graceful effect; then turned his head with a most indignant and contemptuous look on the offenders of his ears, and out he walked, with an expressive attitude of majestic disdain.

26, 27. (26) strike hands, ch. vi. 1, xvii. 18. (27) should he take, *i.e.* the creditor. thy bed, practice had come to override the merciful law of Ex. xxii. 27.

The miseries of debt.—Debt haunts the mind: a conversation about justice troubles it: the sight of a creditor fills it with confusion; even the sanctuary is not a place of refuge. The borrower is servant to the lender. A life at another man's table is not to be accounted for a life. It is mean to flatter the rich; it is humiliating to be the object of pity. To be the slave of unattainable desires is to be despicable and wretched. Independence, so essential to the virtues and pleasures of a man, can only be maintained by setting bounds to our desires, and owing no man anything. A habit of boundless expense undermines and destroys the virtues even in a mind where they seem to dwell. It becomes difficult, and at last impossible, to pay punctually. When a man of sensibility thinks of the low rate at which his word must henceforth pass, he is little in his own eyes; but difficulties prompt him to study deceiving as an art, and at last he lies to his creditors without a blush. How desolate and how woful does his mind appear, now that the fence of truth is broken down! Friendship is next dissolved. He felt it once; he now

b W. Arnot.

"No obligation to justice does force a man to be cruel, or to use the sharpest sentence. A just man does justice to every man and to everything; and then, if he be also wise, he knows there is a debt of mercy and compassion due to the infirmities of man's nature; and that is to be paid; and he that is cruel and ungentle to a sinning person, and does the worst to him, dies in his debt and is unjust."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"Thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes. Thy head is full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat."—*Shakespeare.*

"Run not into debt, either for wares sold or money borrowed; be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to run up the score. Such a man pays at the latter end a third part more than the principal comes to, and is in perpetual servitude to his creditors; lives uncomfortably; is necessitated to increase his debts to stop his creditors' mouths; and many times falls into desperate courses."—*Hale.*

"A man who owes a little can clear it off in a very little time, and, if he is a prudent man, will; whereas a man who, by long negligence, owes a great deal, despairs of ever being able to pay, and therefore never looks into his accounts at all."—*Chesterfield.*

insinuates himself by means of professions and sentiments which were once sincere. He seizes the moment of unsuspecting affection to ensnare the friends of his youth, borrowing money which he never will pay, and binding them for debts which they must hereafter answer. At this rate he sells the virtuous pleasures of loving and being beloved. He swallows up the provision of aged parents, and the portion of sisters and brethren. The loss of truth is followed by the loss of humanity. His calls are still importunate. He proceeds to fraud, and walks on precipices. Ingenuity, which in a better cause might have illustrated his name, is exerted to evade the law, to deceive the world, to cover poverty with the appearance of wealth, to sow unobserved the seeds of fraud.[a]

a Chartery.

28. landmarks, wh. were often merely loose stones laid in the furrows of the open field. These could easily be shifted by little and little.[a] "This is a protest against the grasping covetousness wh. leads men to add field to field." No reference is intended to landmarks of doctrine, or custom.

a For law of boundaries, etc., see De. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; Job xxiv. 2; Ho. v. 10; Pr. xxiii. 10, 11.

Paltry dishonesty.—A young aspirant for office in Iowa drove up to an hotel, alighted, and engaged a room. He desired his trunk taken to his room; and, seeing a man passing whom he supposed to be the porter, he imperiously ordered him to take it up. The porter charged him twenty-five cents, which he paid with a marked quarter, worth only twenty cents. He then said, "You know Governor Grimes?" "Oh, yes, sir!" "Well, take my card to him, and tell him I wish an interview at his earliest convenience." "I am Governor Grimes, at your service, sir." "You—I—that is, my dear sir, I beg—a—a thousand pardons!" "None needed at all, sir," replied Governor Grimes. "I was rather favourably impressed with your letter, and had thought you well suited for the office specified; but, sir, any man who would swindle a working man out of a paltry five cents would defraud the public treasury, had he an opportunity. Good evening, sir!"—*Importance of honesty in little things.*—*The just king.*—One of the kings of Persia, who is famous in history for his exact justice, was once out hunting, when, finding himself hungry, he ordered the people to dress a deer that they had just taken. When all was nearly ready, they found that they had forgotten to bring any salt with them; so they sent a lad off to fetch some from a village at a little distance. The king overheard them, and calling to the boy, said, "And mind you take money to pay for it." The attendants expressed their surprise at his thinking of such trifles, and asked what harm there could be in taking a handful of salt. The king replied, "All the evil that now troubles the earth first began in such trifles, till by degrees it grew to its present height; and if I take the salt, my officers will perhaps seize the cow." There are many people who do not think it worth while to attend to what they are doing except upon great and important occasions; forgetting that happiness and virtue consist in those trifling occurrences of which human life is made up.

"We ought always to deal justly, not only with those who are just to us, but likewise with those who endeavour to injure us; and this, too, for fear lest by rendering them evil for evil, we should fall into the same vice."—*Hierocles.*

"An honest soul is like a ship at sea, that sleeps at anchor on the ocean's calm; but when it rages, and the wind blows high, she cuts her way with skill and majesty."—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

"All other knowledge is hurtful to him who has not honesty and good-nature."—*Montaigne.*

29. diligent, ch. x. 4, xxi. 5. before kings, being found worthy of high and responsible office. His talents shall be at the service of kings.[a] mean, or obscure. The diligent and faithful are sure to come to the front.

a "Of all the qualities which kings especially look to and require in the

Advantage of industry.—Industry need not wish: and he that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands; or, if I have, they are smartly taxed. He that hath a trade hath an estate: and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honour; but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, at the working man's house, hunger looks in, but dares not enter. Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter; for industry pays debts while despair increaseth them.[b]—*Pleasures of industry.*—Industry is not only the instrument of improvement, but the foundation of pleasure: for nothing is so opposite to the true enjoyment of life as the relaxed and feeble state of an indolent mind. He who is a stranger to industry may possess, but he cannot enjoy. It is labour only that gives a relish to pleasure. It is the indispensable condition of our possessing a sound mind in a sound body. Idleness is so inconsistent with both, that it is hard to determine whether it be a greater foe to virtue, or to health and happiness. Inactive as it is in itself, its effects are fatally powerful. Though it appears a slowly-flowing stream, yet it undermines all that is stable and flourishing. It is like water, which first putrefies by stagnation, and then sends up noxious vapours, filling the atmosphere with death.[c]

choice of their servants, that of despatch and energy in the transactions of business is the most acceptable." — *Lord Bacon.*

b Franklin.

Samuel Drew, the celebrated metaphysician, giving an account of his sinful life when a youth, in connection with his shoemaking life, observes, "When I was a young man, I was expert at follies, acute in trifles, and ingenious about nonsense."

c Blair.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) **with a ruler,** who is sure to provide dainties and great abundance. **consider,** *etc.*, some take the reference to be to the dainties; others to be to the character of the ruler in whose presence you are placed. (2) **knife . . throat,** Eastern fig. for putting restraint on the appetite. **given to appetite,**[a] accustomed to look for delicacies, and disposed to self-indulgence. One who cherishes and maintains strong desires. (3) **dainties,** *comp.* Ge. xxvii. 4. **deceitful meat,** *i.e.* having other purpose than you suspect. By inviting you the ruler may be intending to test your self-restraint. Or the reference may be to the delicacies wh., though good to the taste, may prove unwholesome. This may esp. apply to the wines that flow freely at the feasts.

The epicure (*v.* 1).—Consider two things concerning this gastric temptation. I. Its elements 1. A sumptuous banquet: 2. A keen appetite. II. Its resistance. 1. The manner; 2. The reason.[b]

Dean Swift and the lady.—A lady invited Dean Swift to a most sumptuous dinner. She said, "Dear Dean, this fish is not as good as I could wish, though I sent for it half across the kingdom, and it cost me so much," naming an incredible price. "And this thing is not such as I ought to have for such a guest, though it came from such a place, and cost me such a sum." Thus she went on, decrying and underrating every article of her expensive and ostentatious dinner, and teasing her distinguished guest with apologies, only to find a chance to display her vanity, in bringing her trouble and expense into view, until she exhausted his patience. He is reported to have risen in a passion, and to have said, "True, madam, it is a miserable dinner; and I will

a Lit. *owner of appetite.*

The Latins call luxury *gula, the throat.*

"The more a luxurious appetite is humoured and indulged, the more humoursome and troublesome it grows, and the more hard to please. Dainties will surfeit, but never satisfy."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Dr. D. Thomas.

"Famish'd people must be slowly nursed, and fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst."—*Byron.*

"Hunger is the mother of impatience and anger."—*Zimmerman.*

not eat it, but go home and dine upon sixpence worth of herring."[c]

4, 5. (4) **labour . . rich**, *i.e.* do not make merely getting rich the great end of your labour.[a] **cease . . wisdom**, if that sets riches in so high a place. (5) **set thine eyes**, *lit.* "let thine eyes fly." **they fly away**, the transitory character of earthly riches makes them unsuitable as the chief object of our regard and pursuit.[b]

Riches not to be laboured for as an end (*v.* 4).—Two reasons for this. I. It is to pursue your own wisdom. II. It is to pursue a very inferior good. Note three things concerning riches. 1. Their substantial character; 2. Their fleeting character; 3. Their unworthy character.[c]

Bearing the loss of wealth.—We have a remarkable instance of equanimity, in a French nobleman, who was reduced from splendid affluence to poverty by the Revolution which desolated that fine country. The Duke de Laincourt was constrained, like many others, to emigrate on account of the horrors of the French Revolution, and leave his paternal abode and inheritance. When in New York, he was reduced to the necessity of living without a servant, though formerly possessed of an income of more than £100,000 sterling annually. This great reverse he bore with great equanimity, and when brushing his own clothes, or doing other services which had formerly been the work of others, he would observe with a cheerful countenance, "Had it not been for the Revolution in France, I should never have known how easy it is to wait on oneself." How truly relieving to the Christian mind, to meet with a speck so brilliant as the above is in a scene so dark and appalling as was that of the French Revolution! La Harpe was another gem of the same interesting and attractive kind.[d]

6—8. (6) **evil eye**, simply in the sense of being "hard, grudging, envious,"[a] comp. ch. xxii. 9. (7) **thinketh in his heart**, *i.e.* you cannot really judge by his kind speeches, for in his heart he grudges you what you eat. (8) **morsel**, *etc.*, disgusted when you find out his true character, you will be sorry to have eaten his food. **sweet words**, with wh. thou didst thank the man for his supposed good will to you.

The evil eye.—Whether the same ideas are to be attached to the expression "evil eye," as used by Solomon, and as understood by the Egyptians, may not be easily ascertained, though perhaps worthy of consideration. Pococke says of the Egyptians, that "they have a great notion of the magic art, have books about it, and think there is much virtue in talismans and charms; but particularly are strongly possessed with an opinion of the evil eye. When a child is commended, except you give it some blessing, if they are not very well assured of your good will, they use charms against the evil eye; and particularly when they think any ill success attends them on account of an evil eye, they throw salt into the fire."[b] Many references are made in the Scriptures to an evil eye. Sometimes they mean anger or envy; but in the passage cited an allusion appears to be made to the malignant influence of an evil eye: "The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up." The *kan-nuru*, evil-eye, of some people is believed to have a most baneful effect upon what-

c R. T. S.

a 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10.

b "Riches, like insects, while concealed they lie wait but for wings, and in their season fly. To whom can riches give repute and trust, content or pleasure, but the good and just?" —*Pope.*

c Dr. D. Thomas.

"He that resteth upon gains certain, shall hardly grow to great riches; and he that puts all upon adventures, doth oftentimes break and come to poverty. It is good, therefore, to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses."—*Lord Bacon.*

d Whitecross.

a De. xv. 9; Mat. xx. 15.

"Greed is sometimes the acting motive of the feast-maker. These men make feasts for clients and customers. They often do fine strokes of business at their dinner table, in the presence of steaming viands and sparkling glasses."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b Burder.

"Genuine hospitality breaks through the chills of ceremony and selfishness, and thaws every heart into a flow. There is an emanation from the heart in

soever it shall be fixed. Those who are reputed to have such eyes are always avoided, and none but near relations will invite them to a feast. "Your cattle, your wives, your children, your orchards, your fields, are all in danger from that fellow's eyes. The other day he passed my garden, cast his eye upon my lime-tree, and the fruit has since fallen to the ground. Ay, and worse than that, he caught a look at my child's face, and a large abscess has since appeared." To prevent such eyes from doing any injury to their children, many parents (both Mohammedan and Hindoo) adorn them with numerous jewels and jackets of varied colours, to attract the eye from the person to the ornaments.[c] "No nation in the world is so much given to superstition as the Arabs, or even the Mohammedans in general. They hang about their children's necks the figure of an open hand, usually the right, which the Turks and Moors paint likewise upon their ships and houses, as a counter-charm to an evil eye; for five is with them an unlucky number, and five (meaning their fingers) in your eyes, is their proverb of cursing and defiance. Those of riper years carry with them some paragraphs of their Koran, which (as the Jews did their phylacteries, Exod. xiii. 16; Numb. xv. 38) they place upon their breasts, or sew under their caps, to prevent fascination and witchcraft, and to secure themselves from sickness and misfortunes. The virtue of these charms is supposed to be so far universal, that they suspend them even upon the necks of their cattle, horses, and other beasts of burden."[d]

9—11. (9) **fool**, always with the idea of wilfully negligent of good things, unwilling to receive instruction. On such a one good advice is wasted. (10) **landmark**, ch. xxii. 28. **fatherless**, taking undue advantage of their unprotected state. (11) **redeemer**, or avenger. The family avenger of the fatherless is Jehovah Himself.[a]

Taking advice.—Sir John Danvers once sent an invitation to Sir Richard Onslow and Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury) to dine with him at Chelsea; he requested they would come early, as he had affairs of moment to communicate to them. When they arrived, and had taken their seats, Sir John opened the business by saying that he had made choice of them both on account of their correct judgment and particular friendship for him, in order to consult them on a subject of the utmost consequence to himself. He had, he said, been a widower many years, and he began to want some person to relieve him of the trouble of housekeeping, as well as to take some care of him under the growing infirmities of age. For this purpose he had thought of a suitable person who was well known to him: this was, in short, his housekeeper. The gentlemen knowing the woman very well, and thinking it by no means a suitable match, particularly as Sir John had sons and daughters marriageable, to whom it would be mortifying, were much against it. Sir Richard Onslow frankly began to point out to Sir John the impropriety of a person of his age marrying; and particularly such a woman. He was going to enter upon a description of her person, and to set her out in such colours as could not have pleased any man in a wife, when Sir Anthony, interrupting him, said, "Give me leave, Sir Richard, to ask our friend one question before you proceed;" so, addressing himself to Sir John, "Tell me truly, Sir John," said he, "are you not already married?" Sir John,

genuine hospitality wh. cannot be described, but is immediately felt, and puts the stranger at once at his ease."—*Wash. Irving.*

c Roberts.

"A member of the Grammont family one day found Cardinal Richelieu employed in jumping, and, with all the cunning flattery of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the man of political power to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded with a lucrative office."—*E. L. Magoon.*

d Dr. Shaw.

a Ex. xxii. 23—24; Job xxii. 9, 10.

The family *goel*, or avenger, was the next of kin.

"Be thou blest, Bertram! and succeed thy father in manners, as in shape! thy blood and virtue contend for empire in thee; and thy goodness share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy; rather in power, than use; and keep thy friend under thy own life's key; be check'd for silence, but never tax'd for speech."—*Shakespeare.*

"Knowledge of all avails the human kind; for all beyond the grave are joys of mind."—*Hogg.*

"What man so wise, what earthly wit so rare, as to descry the crafty, cunning train by which Deceit doth mask in visor fair, and seem like Truth, whose shape she well can feign?" —*Spenser.*

after a short pause, answered with a smile, "Yes, truly I was yesterday." "Well, then," replied Sir Anthony, "there is no more need of our advice; pray let us have the honour to see my lady, and wish her joy, and so to dinner." As they were returning to London in their coach, "I am obliged to you," said Sir Richard, "for preventing me running into a description which I am sure could never have been forgiven me. But how could it enter into your head to ask a man who had solemnly invited us on purpose to have our advice about a marriage he intended, and gravely proposed the woman to us, and suffered us seriously to enter into the debate: I say, Sir Anthony, how could you ask him, after all this, whether he were already married or not?" "The man and the manner," replied Sir Anthony, "gave me a suspicion that, having done a foolish thing, he wanted to cover himself with the authority of our advice."[b]

b Percy Anec.

"Judge thyself with the judgment of sincerity, and thou wilt judge others with the judgment of charity. That is true humility which, like a harbinger, makes way for Christ, and throws the soul at His feet." —*J. Mason.*

12—14. (12) **apply**, *etc.*, the usual introduction to a new series of Proverbs. (13) **withhold**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xiii. 24, xix. 18, xxii. 15. **not die**, he will not be seriously injured physically, and he will be greatly benefited morally. (14) **hell**, Sheol, the world of the dead: put as fig. for wickedness, wicked ways wh. lead to hell.

Sin covered.—Certain great iron castings have been ordered for a railway bridge. The thickness has been calculated according to the extent of the span and the weight of the load. The contractor constructs his moulds according to the specification, and when all is ready pours in the molten metal. In the process of casting, through some defect in the mould, portions of air lurk in the heart of the iron, and cavities, like those of a honeycomb, are formed in the interior of the beam; but all defects are hid, and the flaws are effectively concealed. The artisan has covered his fault, but he will not prosper. As soon as it is subjected to a strain the beam gives way. Sin covered becomes a rotten hollow in a human soul, and when the strain comes the false gives way.[a]

a W. Arnot.

15—18. (15) **my heart**, that of an anxious father. **even mine**, *comp.* repetition of ch. xxii. 19. (16) **reins**, fig. for inward feelings,[a] Ps. vii. 9. (17) **envy sinners**, whose seeming liberty is attractive to thoughtless young people. **fear of the Lord**, wh. is a bondage that proves to be the true liberty. (18) **an end**, or reward.[b] Poss. Sol. looks on to a state of future rewards.

The constant fear of God (*v.* 17).—I. The duty inculcated. 1. A sense of love to God as our Father; 2. Of duty to Him as our Master; 3. Of responsibility to Him as our Judge. II. The encouragement given to us to the performance of it. 1. Peace of conscience; 2. Strength for duty; 3. Glory in eternity.[c]—*Caution against envy* (*vv.* 17, 18).—We have in these words—I. A dissuasive advice. 1. Because envy is a disposition of mind whose influence can never be justified; 2. To envy sinners is absurd. II. The monitory precept. Implies—1. The possession of correct and spiritual ideas of God's holy and exalted character; 2. The cultivation of suitable dispositions of heart towards Him. III. An encouraging assertion. 1. There is an end to that prosperity with which the efforts of sinners are crowned; 2. An end to the tribulations of saints; 3. Thine expectation shall not be cut off.[d]

[a] "The pleasure afforded the teacher by a pupil's progress is a motive to diligence."—*Fausset.*

[b] Ps. xxxvii. 1—9, 35, 36.

v. 15. *Dr. A. Rees*, iii. 525; *W. Jay*, iv. 36; *H. Melvill*, 310.

v. 17. *R. Fiddes*, ii. 148; *Bp. J. Butler*, 68; *J. Toulmin*, 147; *J. Fawcett*, i. 328; *B. Clement*, ii. 193; *Dr. R. Graves*, iv. 292.

vv. 17, 18. *B. Scott*, 269.

v. 18. *F. Elwin*, ii. 183.

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

[d] *Beta* in 400 Sks.

Effects of belief in the Bible.—When a gentleman lately presented a Bible to a prisoner under sentence of death, he exclaimed, "Oh, sir, if I had had this book, and studied it, I should never have committed the crime of which I am convicted." So it is said of a native Irishman, when he read for the first time in his life a New Testament, which a gentleman had put into his hands, he said, "If I believe this it is impossible for me to remain a rebel."[e]—*Cause of poverty.*—Of 3,000 persons admitted to the workhouse in Salem, Massachusetts, the superintendent states that, in his opinion, 2,900 were brought there directly or indirectly by intemperance. The superintendent of the almshouse in New York states that the number of male adults in the house is 512, of which there are not twenty that can be called sober men; that the number of females is 601, and that he doubts whether there are fifty of them that can be called sober women.[f]

[e] "True dignity abides with him alone who, in the silent hour of inward thought, can still suspect and still revere himself in lowliness of heart."—*Wordsworth.*

[e] *Whitecross.*

[f] *Ibid.*

19—22. (19) guide . . way, *comp.* express. "*ineline* thine heart." (20) winebibbers, those fond of wine, and freely indulging in it. Not necessarily "drunkards." riotous, *etc.*, i.e. gluttons. (21) drowsiness, wh. always follows on much eating and drinking. Men cannot work after heavy feeding. (22) father, ch. i. 8. when . . old, the young are always in danger of scorning the old, as old-fashioned.[a]

Archbishop Tillotson.—There are some children who are almost ashamed to own their parents, because they are poor, or in a low situation of life. We will therefore give an example of the contrary, as displayed by the Dean of Canterbury, afterwards Archbishop Tillotson. His father, who was a very plain Yorkshireman, perhaps something like those we now call "Friends," approached the house where his son resided, and inquired whether "John Tillotson was at home." The servant, indignant at what he thought his insolence, drove him from the door; but the Dean, who was within, hearing the voice of his father, instead of embracing the opportunity afforded him of going out and bringing in his father in a more private manner, came running out, exclaiming, in the presence of his astonished servants, "It is my beloved father;" and falling down on his knees, asked for his blessing. Obedience and love to our parents is a very distinct and important command of God, upon which He has promised His blessing, and His promises never fail.[b]

[a] "Adults should revere the parents whom, as children, they obeyed."—*Faussett.*

v. 19. *J. Foster*, i. 28.

v. 22. *M. A. Meilan*, ii. 232.

"Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong, blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong; the strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long."—*Crabbe.*

"Wine is a turncoat; first a friend, and then an enemy"—*Fielding.*

[b] *R. T. S.*

23. buy, lit. *get.* truth, on every subject; but especially *the* truth of God.[a] "No price is too great to give for its purchase."[b]

Truth's purchase (*v.* 23).—I. Every purchaser must have an earnest desire after the heavenly commodity. II. He must diligently frequent the place of sale. III. He must have skill to discover that which is offered to him. IV. He must give the price according to the commodity. V. He must store it up for necessary use. VI. With the knowledge of the truth must be joined obedience to the truth. VII. The truth once entertained must never be renounced. VIII. A course of obedience once entered must never be forsaken. IX. The purchase of truth once made must still be enlarged.[c]

Fidelity to the truth.—*Kossuth.*—When Kossuth, escaping the pursuit of the Cossacks, sought the protection of the Sultan, that monarch offered him safety, wealth, and high military com-

[a] Is. lv. 1; Mat. xiii. 45, 46.

[b] Lat. prov. "Heaven concedes everything to the laborious."

v. 23. *Bp. Hall*, v. 150; *A. Farindon*, ii. 373; *J. Saurin*, ii. 371; *Bp. Butler*, 234; *A. Macdonald*, 153; *Theodore Parker*, 31.

[c] *S. Hieron* (1629).

"Truth is not only a man's or-

nament, but his instrument; it is the great man's glory and the poor man's stock; a man's truth is his livelihood, his recommendation, his letters of credit." — *Whichcote.*

"Truth is the ground of science, the centre wherein all things repose, and is the type of eternity." — *Sir Philip Sidney.*

d Quiver.

"He that cometh to seek after knowledge, with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter for his humour, but no matter for his instruction." —*Bacon.*

e R. T. S.

f W. W. Whythe.

"It is reported of Redwald, king of the East Saxons, the first prince of this nation that was baptised, that in the same church he had one altar for the Christian religion, another for the heathenish sacrifices. The true believer doth otherwise; he that makes religion his work gives God the whole of his heart, without halting and without halving." — *George Swinnock.*

mand if he would renounce Christianity and embrace the religion of Mahomet. A refusal of these conditions, for anything he knew to the contrary, would be equivalent to throwing himself upon the sword of Russia, which was whetted for his destruction; and this was his answer:—"Welcome, if need be, the axe or the gibbet, but evil befall the tongue that dares to make me so infamous a proposal." Deliberately to prefer death to the sacrifice of conscience is that kind of Christian integrity enjoined in the command, "Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear Him."—*Zwingle.*—When Ulric Zwingle, the Swiss Reformer, was revolving certain doubts which had arisen in his mind, and had nearly arrived at the conclusion that he should soon be called upon to attack the Papacy, he proposed to resign a small pension which the Pope had given him. The legate of the pontiff, however, prevailed upon him to retain it, and Zwingle, as he announced his intention of doing so, added, "Do not think that for any money I will suppress a single syllable of the truth." Zwingle's after life was worthy of these words. To be incorruptible by any form of bribe is an essential part of integrity.[d]—*Three Sunday scholars.*—A Sunday-school teacher, remarking on the passage in the Proverbs of Solomon in which he advises us to "buy the truth, and sell it not," observed, that he who buys the truth makes a good bargain; and inquired if any scholar recollected any instance in Scripture of a bad bargain. "I do," replied a boy; "Esau made a bad bargain when he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage." A second said, "Judas made a bad bargain when he sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver." A third observed, "Our Lord tells us, that he makes a bad bargain who, to gain the whole world, loses his own soul."[e]

24—28. (24) **wise**, wh. may be shown in his seeking after the truth. (25) **bare thee**, special joy comes to the mother from wise and virtuous children. (26) **give me**, Sol. pleads as a loving, anxious parent; but his pleading represents God's pleading with us all. Sol. is specially anxious to have attention to the advice and warning that immediately succeeds. (27) **whore**, an abandoned woman, who tempts to sins of sensuality. (28) **as for a prey**, her prey being innocence and virtue.

Consecration to God (*v.* 26).—I. How we should give our hearts to God. 1. Sincerely; 2. Freely; 3. Entirely; 4. Continually. II. Why we should give our hearts to God. 1. He demands it; 2. Has a right to it; 3. Is worthy of it; 4. It is our interest to give it.[a]

The best gift.—The three sons of an Eastern lady were invited to furnish her with an expression of their love before she went away for a long journey. One brought a marble tablet, with the inscription of her name. Another presented her with a rich garland of fragrant flowers. The third entered her presence, and thus addressed her: "Mother, I have neither marble tablet nor fragrant nosegay, but I have a heart: here your name is engraven, here your memory is precious; and this heart, full of affection, will follow you wherever you travel, and remain with you wherever you repose."

29—32. (29) woe, *etc.*, words prob. expressing distress.[a] wounds, caused by quarrellings of the drunken. redness of eyes, a frequent effect of drinking. It may, however, be the dimness, or confusion of the eye. (30) mixed wine, ch. ix. 2; Is. v. 11. Flavoured with spices. Comp. our punch. They seek highly-flavoured wine in the spirit of connoisseurs. (31) red, wh. prob. indicated the presence of spices that increased its stimulating qualities. colour, or "the bubbles on wh. the wine-drinker looks with complacency." moveth, *etc.*,[b] or goeth down sweetly. (32) adder, or cockatrice. After consequences to the self-indulgent become terrible and fatal.

The drunkard's effigy (*v.* 29).—Some things to be observed. I. His sensual indulgence. II. His offensive garrulousness. III. His bloodshot face. IV. His wretched condition. V. His easy temptability. VI. His reckless stupidity.[c] VII. His unconquerable thirst. Apply:—Young men, look at this terrible effigy.[c]

The doings of drink.—A collier brig was stranded on the Yorkshire coast, and a clergyman had occasion to assist in the distressing service of rescuing a part of the crew by drawing them up a vertical cliff two or three hundred feet in altitude, by means of a very small rope, the only material at hand. The first two men who caught hold of the rope were hauled safely up to the top; but the next, after being drawn to a considerable height, slipped his hold and fell; and with the fourth and last who ventured upon this only chance of life, the rope gave way, and he also was plunged into the foaming breakers beneath. Immediately afterwards the vessel broke up, and the remnant of the ill-fated crew perished before our eyes. What now was the cause of this heartrending event? Was it stress of weather, or a contrary wind, or unavoidable accident? No such thing. It was the entire want of moral conduct in the crew. Every sailor, to a man, was in a state of intoxication! The helm was entrusted to a boy ignorant of the coast. He ran the vessel upon the rock at Whitby, and one-half of the miserable, dissipated crew awoke to consciousness in eternity.[d]

33—35. (33) eyes . . women, drinking being exciting to sensuality:[a] and the tempters taking advantage of the lost self-control of those in drink. perverse things, the talk of the drunken is often very foul. (34) lieth . . sea, a suggestive picture of the inability of the drunken to stand steady. lieth . . mast, in drunken drowsiness knowing no danger wherever he may be put. (35) stricken, *etc.*,[b] an imitation of the maunderings of the drunken man. yet again, drinking habits becoming a constant enticement and slavery.

The Quaker's advice.—An elderly gentleman, accustomed to "indulge," entered the travellers' room of a tavern where sat a grave Friend by the fire. Lifting a pair of green spectacles upon his forehead, rubbing his inflamed eyes, and calling for brandy and water, he complained to the Friend that "his eyes were getting weaker, and that even spectacles didn't seem to do them any good." "I'll tell thee, friend," replied the Quaker, "what I think. If thou wouldst wear thy spectacles over thy mouth for a few months thine eyes would get well again."—*Drunkards—when to be corrected.*—Correct not your servants when they are drunk, it shows as if you were drunk yourself.[c]

a "The sharp touch of the satirist reproduces the actual inarticulate utterances of drunkenness."—*Spk. Com.*

b Possibly its foaming, or sparkling, may be meant.

vr. 29, 30. *J. Ramsey*, 69.

c *Dr. D. Thomas.*

"The sight of a drunkard is a better sermon against that vice than the best that was ever preached upon that subject."—*Saville.*

d *R. T. S.*

"A drunken man is like a drowned man, a fool, and a madman; one draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and the third drowns him."—*Shakespeare.*

a "The moral effects of drink are—it inflames passion, lays open the heart, produces insensibility to the greatest dangers, and debars from reformation under the severest sufferings."—*Fausset.*

b "He tells how he feebly remembers having experienced, without really feeling, even blows and bodily abuse of other kinds, while he was in his intoxication."—*O. Zöckler.*

v. 34. *F. L. Petitpierre*, ii. 37.

c *Cleobulus.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **envious**, *etc.*, Ps. xxxvii. 1, lxxiii. 3. (2) **studieth**, plotteth, planneth, what really will prove to be destruction.

The villany and absurdity of sin (*v.* 1).—I. The villany of sin. Here is a description of sinners. 1. Their study is destruction; 2. Their speech is mischief. II. The absurdity of sin. 1. Sin envies the most unenviable things; 2. Sin desires the most undesirable things.[a]

Description and origin of envy.—

Envy at last crawls forth from hell's dire throng,
Of all the direfull'st! her black locks hung long,
Attir'd with curling serpents; her pale skin
Was almost dropp'd from her sharp bones within;
And at her breast stuck vipers, which did prey
Upon her panting heart both night and day,
Sucking black blood from thence, which to repair,
Both day and night they left fresh poisons there.
Her garments were deep-stain'd in human gore,
And torn by her own hands, in which she bore
A knotted whip and bowl, which to the brim
Did with green gall and juice of wormwood swim;
With which, when she was drunk, she furious grew,
And lashed herself: thus from the accursed crew
Envy, the worst of fiends, herself presents;
Envy, good only when she herself torments.[b]

3, 4. (3) **a house**, put here as a fig. of the family. What applies to the house applies much more to the rearing of a family. **established**, on sound and good foundations. (4) **chambers**, the parts of wh. the house is made up; the members of the family. **precious and pleasant**, right and beautiful.

Intelligent goodness (*vv.* 3—7).—We shall take wisdom here not only as representing piety, but piety in association with intelligence and skill. I. It is conducive to wealth. II. It is conducive to power. 1. Intelligence apart from piety is power; 2. Piety apart from intelligence is a higher kind of power; 3. Piety associated with intelligence is the highest creature power. III. It is conducive to safety. 1. It takes counsel of the wise; 2. It has power at the gate.[a]

The philosopher and the ferryman.—A philosopher stepped on board a ferryboat to cross a stream: on the passage he inquired of the ferryman if he understood arithmetic. The man looked astonished. "Arithmetic? No, sir, never heard of it before." The philosopher replied: "I am very sorry, for one quarter of your life is gone." A few minutes after, he asked the ferryman: "Do you know anything of mathematics?" The boatman smiled, and replied, "No." "Well, then," said the philosopher, "another quarter of your life is gone." A third question was asked the ferryman: "Do you understand astronomy?" "Oh, no, no! never heard of such a thing." "Well, my friend, then another quarter of your life is gone." Just at this moment the boat ran on a rock, and was sinking, when the ferryman jumped up, pulled off his coat, and asked the philosopher, with great earnestness of manner, "Sir, can you swim?" "No," said the philo-

a Dr. D. Thomas. "As a shadow accompanies those that walk in the sun, so envy is a constant companion of those that excel others. As there is no shadow where there is no sun, so there is no envy where there is no prosperity. As the joys of the happy increase, the sorrows of the envious multiply. As a ship tossed with continual waves, so the envious is always in trouble of mind, repining at the success of others."—*Caudray.*
b Cowley.

a Dr. D. Thomas. Athanasius once said, "If the world goes against truth, then Athanasius goes against the world, for Jehovah and Athanasius are always a majority."
"Truth is the joining or separating of signs, as the things signified agree or disagree."—*Locke.*
"The more we know, the greater our thirst for knowledge. The water lily, in the midst of waters, opens its leaves and expands its petals at the first pattering of showers, and rejoices in the rain-drops with a quicker sympathy than the parched shrub in the sandy desert."—*Coleridge.*

sopher. "Well, then," said the ferryman, "your whole life is lost; for the boat is going to the bottom."

5, 6. (5) **is strong**, *lit.* is in strength, *i.e.* is rooted and established in it. (6) **counsel**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xi. 14, xx. 18.

Application of knowledge.—In a dark night, I once saw a feeble lamp struggling to pierce the dense darkness: but the mighty genius of night defied its impotent rays. Near by, I saw another lamp, of the same general pattern, whose light streamed out dazzlingly into the distant darkness. I asked, "Why does this lamp give more light than the other? Is the oil better?" "No." "Does it burn more oil?" "No." "Is the burner better?" "No." "But, surely, it generates more light?" Unexpectedly, the answer was "No." "Why, then, does it emit a light so much more dazzling than the other?" This was the answer: "Do you see behind that bright lamp the polished reflector, which the other has not? That reflector gathers all the divergent rays, and converges and flings them out in one glittering flood of light." Professor Jaques thus illustrates two men equally learned: one having the power of reducing his knowledge to practice, and the other destitute of it.

7–9. (7) **in the gate**, ch. xxii. 22.[a] (8) **mischievous**, because he is set upon doing the wrong, which is always injurious and mischievous. (9) **thought . . sin**, *i.e.* cherishing the foolish and the wilful is sin. The suggestion of evil is not our sin, but the cherishing of the evil suggestion is our sin. **scorner**, or scoffer.

Aspects of depravity (*vv.* 8, 9).—Depravity is represented to us in the text as—I. Mischievous in purpose. 1. This is the work of the devil; 2. It is the work to which he inspires all his followers. II. As sinful in thought. 1. Voluntary; 2. Involuntary. III. As abhorrent in character.[b]

A silent reproof.—The Rev. Mr. W——, missionary at the Sandwich Islands, a short time before leaving America, took a passage from New York to New Haven in a packet. In the evening, a company of fellow-passengers, who were quite profane, gathered round a table on which was the only light burning in the cabin, and soon became deeply engaged in gambling. Mr. W——, after reflecting some time on the best means of reproving them, drew a Bible from his trunk, and politely requested that he might have a seat at the same table, for the purpose of reading. The sight of the Bible at once stopped their swearing: and after gambling in total silence about ten minutes, they all left the table and went upon deck—thus evincing that the silent reproofs of a good man, with the Bible in his hand, are too loud and too pointed for the guilty consciences of some gamblers to endure.[c]

10–12. (10) **faint**, under trial, or temptation: *the day of straits.* **small**, or strait; a play on the word. (11) **forbear**, *etc.*, reference is to neglect of the proper duty of a king to defend those who are unjustly condemned. The veto of life and death is in the hand of the king.[a] (12) **we knew it not**, the excuse of neglect, wh. cannot be accepted bec. due inquiry may not have been made. **render . . works**, "God's retributive justice cannot be avoided by professed ignorance."

The folly of vain excuses (*vv.* 11, 12).—I. The excuses by which

v. 5. *J. Abernethy*, iii. 86; *J. C. Galloway*, 309.

"A climbing height it is, without a head, depth without bottom, way without end; a circle with no line environ'd, not comprehended,—all it comprehends worth infinite, yet satisfies no mind; till it that infinite of the Godhead find."—*Greville.*

"Setting down in writing is a lasting memory."—*Fielding.*

a "Wisdom is in high places, whose lofty altitudes cannot be scaled by fools."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 9. *Dr. R. Fiddes*, i. 60.

b Dr. D. Thomas.

"Weigh not so much what men say as what they prove; remembering that truth is simple and naked, and needs not invective to apparel her comeliness."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

c Whitecross.

To the "tree of knowledge" be sure there be added "the tree of life."

a "Instead of fainting (and falling short of duty) in the day of adversity, the man is to help others to the uttermost of his power."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 12. *Bp. Sanderson*, 603.

vv. 11, 12. *Dr. P.*

men deceive their own souls, as pleas for the neglect—1. Of religious duties; 2. Of moral duties. II. The folly of resting in them, for God—1. Will judge with truth; 2. Will reward with equity. Let the subject teach us—(1) To be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy; (2) To live in the daily expectation of the future judgment.[b]

Doddridge, iii. 229.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

"The only way to make the mass of mankind see the beauty of justice is by showing them in pretty plain terms the consequence of injustice." — *Sydney Smith.*

Justice to the condemned.—It was allowed among the Jews that if any person could offer anything in favour of a prisoner after sentence was passed, he might be heard before execution was done; and therefore it was usual, as the Mishna shows, that when a man was led to execution, a crier went before him and proclaimed, "This man is now going to be executed for such a crime, and such and such are witnesses against him. whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come forth, and make it appear."[c]

c Doddridge.

13, 14. (13) **honey . . honeycomb**, the figs. for food that is specially pleasant and agreeable.[a] Honey was one of the choice productions of Canaan, and it was as healthful and strengthening as it was pleasant. (14) **knowledge of wisdom**, *lit.* "Know wisdom for thy soul." Let it be to thy soul as honey to thy palate. **reward**, *lit.* after-part. **expectation**, of blessing out of knowledge.[b]

The sweetness of Divine wisdom (*vv.* 13, 14).—As honey is to the bodily appetite, so is wisdom to the soul. I. Under peculiar circumstances. Thus, to the traveller honey is a refreshment: so to heaven-bound travellers is wisdom. II. In its associations. Thus Samson's honey would remind him of his previous encounter with the lion; and Divine wisdom sometimes reminds us of the victories of grace. III. In its accumulations. Honey is extracted from a thousand flowers, and carefully stored; so wisdom is drawn from many texts, and lodged in the memory. IV. In its assimilation. Honey must be taken into the body, etc.; wisdom must be mentally digested. V. In its fitness to the palate. Honey is not liked by all, nor is wisdom.

Honey an emblem of pleasure.—In this country persons do not "find" honey under circumstances which constitute them its lawful possessors, though they may obtain it by purchase or by bee-nurture. But the caution touches those who do not live in a "land flowing with milk and honey." The honey is unmistakably the representative of pleasure, attainable, we may say, by things lawful in themselves, and only evil when abused. Just as bread sets forth, in figure, the daily comforts of life viewed *en masse*, so does honey stand for those pleasures an excess of which causes a moral surfeit. The same idea occurs in the writings of some of the pagans of olden time, for we find an ancient philosopher advising his pupils that honey should be eaten with the tip of the finger.

a Comp. Ps. xix. 10.

"Honey entered largely into the diet of Heb. children (Is. vii. 15), so that it was a natural emblem for the purest and simplest wisdom."—*Spk. Com.*

b Pr. xxiii. 18.

"Hebrew, in point of force and purity, seems at its height in Isaiah; it is most corrupt in Daniel, and not much less so in Ecclesiastes; which I cannot believe to have been actually composed by Solomon, but rather suppose to have been so attributed by the Jews, in their passion for ascribing all works of that sort to their grand monarque."—*Coleridge.*

15, 16. (15) **O wicked man**, better, "with wicked men."[a] **against the dwelling**, thinking to charge some iniquity upon it, or compass some design against it. (16) **falleth**, into such *calamities* as men by wicked devices may bring upon him. There is no reference here to the good man's falling into *sin*. "The point of the teaching is not the liability of even good men to err, but God's providential care over them."[b] **seven times**, a definite put for an indefinite number.[c] Comp. our term, "again

a "From the Fall to this hour there has been in the mind of the wicked an aversion to the truly righteous. In every chapter of hum. history this enmity is re-

and again." There is a marvellous buoyancy in goodness. shall fall,[d] and know no uprising.

A word to the wicked concerning the good (*v.* 15).—I. What is implied in this text? 1. That the wicked can discern goodness; 2. That he is maliciously disposed to destroy the good man; 3. That he is envious of him. II. What is taught in it? 1. That a good man may fall before the machinations of the wicked; 2. That if he recover from the fall, he will still pursue the right way; 3. That the fall of the wicked adds to his disgrace.

Maliciousness corrected.—A gentleman had a garden, in which he took great delight. It was surrounded by the cottages of his tenants and labourers, to whom he justly looked as the protectors of his property, and felt secure, inasmuch as no person could approach his premises but through theirs. He had for some days watched the progress of a fine bed of tulips. "To-morrow," said he, "they will be in full perfection," and he invited a company of friends to witness the display of their beauties. In the morning he hastened to the spot: but to his utter astonishment, the whole bed was a scene of shrivelled desolation. Some unaccountable influence had withered every stem, and each flower lay prostrate and fading on the ground. A short time afterwards, a bed of ranunculuses shared the same fate: and in succession several other choice and favourite productions. At length the gentleman became persuaded that the destruction did not proceed from any natural cause, such as blight or lightning, but that it must have been occasioned by the intentional mischief of some treacherous and malignant individual who had access to the grounds. He resolved therefore to watch, and engaged a friend to accompany him for that purpose. After remaining in their station some time, they saw a person come out of one of the cottages, and apply some destructive preparation to the roots of such flowers as were advancing to blossom. The gentleman at once recognised him as a workman whom, a few weeks before, he had had occasion to reprove, and who thus malignantly gratified his resentment. His friend strongly urged that the offender should be prosecuted, and offered to bear witness against him. But the proprietor replied, "No; I am much obliged by your kindness in remaining with me; I have ascertained the author of the mischief, and am satisfied; I must use another method of dealing with him." In the morning, the gentleman ordered his servant to purchase a fine joint of meat, and carry it to the cottage of this man, desiring he would enjoy it with his family. This treatment, so contrary to his deserts and expectations, proved the means of effectually humbling and softening his stubborn and malignant heart. The offender presented himself before his injured master, freely confessed his guilt, implored forgiveness, and proved from that day forward a most faithful, diligent, and devoted servant. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."[e]

17, 18. (17) rejoice not, "delight in injury is the twin sister to a plotting intrigue and violence."[a] stumbleth, *see* the word used in verse 16, "fall into mischief." (18) displease him, *Heb.* "it be evil in His eyes." turn . . him, and bring that wrath to bear on you.[b]

vealed."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

[b] Ps. xxxiv. 19.

[c] Job v. 19.

[d] "Are brought to a downfall by calamity."—*O. Zöckler.*

vv. 15, 16. *W. Berriman*, i. 310.

"Think, when you are enraged at any one, what your sentiments would probably become should he die during the dispute."—*Shenstone.*

The infatuated Caligula slew his brother because he was a beautiful young man.

"There is no small degree of malicious craft in fixing upon a season to give a mark of enmity and ill-will: a word — a look, which at one time would make no impression, at another time wounds the heart, and, like a shaft flying with the wind, pierces deep, which with its own natural force would scarce have reached the object aimed at."—*Sterne.*

"They say that love and tears are learned without any master; and I may say that there is no great need of studying at the court to learn envy and revenge."—*N. Caussin.*

[e] *R. T. S.*

[a] Job xxxi. 29; Ps. xxxv. 15; Pr xvii. 5.

Be more glad to see a man's

amendment than his punishment.

b "Lest He turn His wrath to thee."—*Schultens.*

"Thy joy will be suicidal, the wrath of the righteous Judge will be turned upon thee as the greater offender, and thou wilt have to bear a worse evil than that which thou exultest in."—*Spk. Com.*

"He that is not concerned that his brother should perish is in great danger of perishing himself."—*Bp. Wilson.*

c The King's Son.

a Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3; Pr. i. 11.

b Lit. "no future."

c Job xxi. 17; Ps. xxxvii. 2.

The way of every man is declarative of the end of that man. Men reap as they sow.

vv. 19, 20. *J. G. Zollikoffer*, i. 216; *J. W. Warter*, i. 263.

"Genius may coexist with wildness, idleness, folly, even with crime; but not long, believe me, with selfishness, and the indulgence of an envious disposition."—*Coleridge.*

"Our aim is happiness; 'tis yours, 'tis mine, he said; 'tis the pursuit of all that live, yet few attain it, if 'twas

Malice overruled for good to the good (*vv.* 17, 18).—I. The envious heart—1. Rejoices revengefully when an enemy falls; 2. Is glad when a man in the right way stumbles. II. God's rebuke of envy. 1. He sees it; 2. Is displeased with it: 3. Helps the man who falls or stumbles, not because of merit only, but also to rebuke the envious; 4. This may explain the recovery of men in many instances, and serve to moderate the exultation of the just; their deliverance may be not a reward to them, but a rebuke to others.

Billy Bray's parable.—A celebrated local preacher, generally known as Billy Bray, was once preaching with great effect to a large congregation, principally miners. In that neighbourhood there were two mines, one very prosperous and the other quite the reverse, for the work was hard and the wages low. He represented himself as working at that mine, but on the "pay-day" going to the prosperous one for his wages. But had he not been at work at the other mine? the manager inquired. He had, but he liked the wages at the good mine the best. He pleaded very earnestly, but in vain. He was dismissed at last with the remark, from which there was no appeal, that he must come there to work if he came there for his wages. And then he turned upon the congregation, and the effect was almost irresistible, that they must serve Christ here if they would share His glory hereafter; but if they would serve the devil now, to him they must go for their wages by-and-by.[c]

19, 20. (19) **fret not**, *etc.*, as Ps. xxxvii. 1. **envious**, be not excited, burn not against. The undeserved prosperity of wicked men might excite to imitation of their wicked conduct.[a] (20) **no reward**,[b] none as a Divine recognition; none that shall be permanent and satisfying. **candle**, or lamp: ch. xiii. 9.[c]

A common fault corrected (*vv.* 19, 20).—I. The fault defined,—"fret," etc. Men are fretful sometimes when they see the prosperity of the wicked, as compared with the sorrows of the good: they sometimes wish they had some of the good things that fall to others, and excuse their envy by thinking of what in such a case they would do. II. The fault corrected. The wicked shall have no reward for any good he may have done: "they have their reward," "their candle," etc., *i.e.* the light of their fame, office, power, wealth, life.

Phocion's dying charge to his son.—Phocion was an Athenian, born some four hundred years B.C., and one of the most upright and benevolent heathen that ever lived. Yet he was condemned to die as a criminal, and denied even a grave in the country to which he had devoted his life. What could be more unjust in the Athenians, than putting their public benefactor to death in such a way as this? They sadly repented their madness afterwards, put the accuser to death, and erected a statue to Phocion's memory. But when Phocion had taken the poison which he was condemned to drink, and was about to die, "he charged his son, with his last breath, that he should show no resentment against his persecutors."[d]—*Choice of happiness or misery.*—He that will allow exquisite and endless happiness to be but the possible consequence of a good life here, and the contrary state the possible reward of a bad one, must own himself to judge very much amiss if he does not conclude that a virtuous life, with the

certain expectation of everlasting bliss which may come, is to be preferred to a vicious one, with the fear of that dreadful state of misery which it is very possible may overtake the guilty, or at best the terrible uncertain hope of annihilation. This is evidently so, though the virtuous life here had nothing but pain, and the vicious, continual pleasure; which yet is, for the most part, quite otherwise, and wicked men have not much the odds to brag of, even in their present possession; nay, all things rightly considered, have, I think, the worse part here. But when infinite happiness is put in one scale, against infinite misery in the other, if the worst that comes to the pious man, if he mistakes, be the best that the wicked attain to, if he be in the right, who can without madness run the venture? Who in his wits would choose to come within a possibility of infinite misery, which if he miss there is yet nothing to be got by that hazard? whereas, on the other side, the sober man ventures nothing against infinite happiness to be got, if his expectation comes to pass. If the good man be in the right, he is eternally happy; if he mistakes, he is not miserable, he feels nothing. On the other side, if the wicked be in the right, he is not happy; if he mistakes, he is infinitely miserable. Must it not be a most manifest wrong judgment that does not presently see to which side in this case the preference is to be given?[c]

21, 22. (21) **fear . . king,** *comp.* Ec. viii. 2, x. 20; 1 Pe. ii. 17. **given to change,** either in the religious worship or the national government.[a] Those who oppose the present order, who are seditious, revolutionary. (22) **suddenly,**[b] because agitators are dealt with vigorously. To discovered rebels little mercy is shown. **of them both,** *i.e.* of them that fear not the Lord, and of them that fear not the king; meddling demagogues.

Fear God and the king (*v.* 21).—I. According to their several relations: God supremely, the king subordinately. II. According to the departments of their rule: "render to Cæsar," etc. III. According to the justness of their administrations. IV. According to the end of life, when God will be everything, and the king a man like thyself.

Sad end of a church member.—Never shall I forget the end of one with whom I was well acquainted, a member of the church of which I was pastor at Perth. At the solicitation of a traveller with whom he did business, he retired one evening to an hotel. For the first time in his life he became intoxicated, went home, and in the heat of passion excited by liquor inflicted on his wife injuries of which she died. In due time he was tried, the evidence was conclusive, and sentence of death was pronounced. Never shall the scene be effaced from my memory. I attended him in his cell, and was the last to leave him on the scaffold; and there, within sight of the church of which he had been forty years a member, was he hanged like a dog![c]

23–26. (23) **respect of persons,** *i.e.* so as to allow such respect to pervert judgment. Lit. "to discern faces," so showing partiality.[a] (24) **wicked . . righteous,** this represents a false judicial decision, wh. justifies the wicked. **people curse,** nothing so quickly embitters a people as corruption in the fountains of justice. (25) **rebuke,** the wicked: judging

e'er attained; but they the widest wander from the mark, who thro' the flowery paths of sauntering joy seek this coy goddess." — *Armstrong.*

d Cheever.

e Locke.

"As flies leave the sound, and light upon the corrupted and putrefied parts of the body, and so delight in the filth that it is hard to keep them from it, so an envious man has no pleasure in good qualities, but only in that which is diseased and corrupted." —*Cawdray.*

a "Lit. alterers; men of fickleness, who cannot be relied on."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Those that are of restless, factious, turbulent spirits, commonly pull mischief upon their own heads ere they are aware."—*Mat. Henry.*

"The only lasting foundation of civil obedience is the fear of God; and the truest interest of princes is to maintain the honour of religion, by wh. they secure their own."—*Bp. Sherlock.*

c Dr. J. Burns.

a "If they who employ their labour and travail about the public administration of justice, follow it only as a trade,

with unquenchable thirst of gain, being not in heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves His agents in this business, the sentence of right God's own verdict, and themselves His priests to deliver it, formalities of justice do but serve to smother right, and that which was necessarily ordained for the common good is, through shameful abuse, made the cause of common misery."—*Hooker.*

righteous judgment. **good blessing,** that of a people who feel secure because justice rules. (26) **kiss,** *etc.*, better, "He shall kiss lips that giveth a right answer:" *i.e.* He shall gain the hearts of men by answering righteously. **right answer,** *lit.* plain words: not deceptive, or obscure.

Respect of persons (*v.* 23).—I. Shows a mercenary spirit. II. Betrays a tyrannous heart towards the poor. III. Manifests a truckling spirit to the rich. IV. Exhibits a cowardly mind towards the powerful. V. Demonstrates a mean view of justice. VI. Treasures up a fearful retribution, when one will be judged as he now judges.

Easy way to confer happiness.—"If a civil word or two will render a man happy," said a French king, "he must be wretched indeed who will not give them to him." Were superiors to keep this in view, yea, were all mankind to observe it, how much happier would the world be than what it is! We may say of this disposition, "that it is like lighting another man's candle by one's own, which loses none of its light by what the other gains."[b]—*Title and character.*—An elector of Cologne, who is likewise an archbishop, one day swearing profanely, asked a peasant, who seemed to wonder, what he was so surprised at? "To hear an archbishop swear," replied the peasant. "I swear," replied the elector, "not as an archbishop, but as a prince." "But, my lord," said the peasant, "when the prince goes to the devil, what will become of the archbishop?"[c]

Happiness in nature and riches contrasted.—

I sit to-night
As dreary as the pale deserted East,
That sees the sun, the sun that once was hers,
Forgetful of her, flattering his new love,
The happy blushing West. In these long streets
Of traffic and of noise, the human hearts
Are hard and loveless as a wreck-strewn coast;
Eternity doth wear upon her face
The veil of time. They only see the veil,
And thus they know not what they stand so near.
Oh, rich in gold! Beggars in heart and soul!
Poor as the empty void! Why I, even I,
Sitting in this bare chamber with my thoughts,
Are richer than ye all, despite your bales,
Your streets of warehouses, your mighty mills,
Each booming like a world, faint heard in space.
Your ships; unwilling fires, that day and night
Writhe in your service seven years, then die
Without one taste of peace. Do ye believe
A simple primrose on a grassy bank
Forth-peeping to the sun, a wild-bird's nest,
The great orb, dying in a ring of clouds,
Like hoary Jacob 'mong his waiting sons;
The rising moon, and the young stars of God,
Are things to love? With these my soul is brimmed;
With a diviner and serener joy
Than all thy heaven of money-bags can bring
Thy dry heart, Worldling![d]

27. **without,** in the field, etc. The business of life, by wh. the means of subsistence is gained, is conceived of as away from

b *Cheever.*

"What this is the Bible alone shows clearly and certainly, and points out the way that leads to the attainment of it. This is that which prevailed with St. Augustine to study the Scriptures, and engaged his affection to them:—"In Cicero and Plato, and other such writers,' says he, 'I meet with many things acutely said, and things that excite a certain warmth of emotion, but in none of them do I find these words, Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. xi. 28).'"—*S. T. Coleridge.*

c *Whitecross.*

d *Alex. Smith.*

a "Take care, by the profitable and

the dwelling-house.[a] "Let those things wh. are obviously most important and necessary be done first." build . . house, either "raise a dwelling," as distinct from a tent in the field; or "found a family," "set up a domestic establishment."[b]

The chief things first (*v.* 27).—I. Apply the advice here given to the common things of life. The principal thing is to secure the means of living: the sphere of the spending will follow in due course. A word to young married people who are apt to begin life with too large establishments. II. Apply it to the higher concerns of the soul. "Seek first the kingdom of God," etc.

"*Fear nothing but sin.*"—A group had gathered around the couch of a dying mother. In an hour least expected the summons had come, bidding her depart to the spirit-land. She had but a moment to think, to say farewell to the loved ones of her household. Hastily calling them together, they were only in time to hear her dying message—"Fear nothing but sin." It was all that she could say. Upon the sound of the last word, the cord of life snapped, and "she was not, for God took her." The children were motherless, but what a legacy she had left them! In that single moment of her life she had given them advice of a priceless nature. Through all their days it might remain with them, and serve as a safe guide on life's pilgrimage.[c]—*Experience regarding happiness.*—Eight gentlemen were once travelling together; when each gave his experience in reply to the question, "Are you happy, fully happy?" A banker said that he had acquired a fortune, which was invested beyond a possibility of loss; that he had a most lovely and devoted family, yet the thought that he must leave them all for ever cast a funeral-pall over the decline of his life. A military officer said that he had known glory and the intoxication of triumph; but after the battle he passed over the field, and found a brother-officer dying. Trying to relieve him, the dying man said, "Thank you; but it is too late. We must all die: think upon it: think upon it." This scene and these words fastened upon him, and he could find no deliverance. He confessed his unhappiness. A diplomatist spoke of the honours and gratitude showered upon him during a long and successful career, yet confessed an emptiness of the heart, a secret malady, which all his honours could not cure. A poet told of the pleasures he enjoyed with the Muses; of the applause of the people; of his fame, which he was assured was immortal: but, dissatisfied, he cries out, "What is such an immortality?" and declares his unsatisfied longing for a higher immortality. A man of the world said that his effort had been to laugh at everything; to look at the bright side of things, and be gay; to find pleasure in the ball-room, theatre, and other amusements; yet confessed that he sometimes had the *ennui*, and was not perfectly happy. A lawyer of threescore and ten said that he had health, wealth, reputation, and domestic felicity; that, during his period of labour, he longed for just what he now possessed; but he did not find the expected enjoyment, and contentment was not his heritage. His hours were long; his existence monotonous: he was not fully happy. A religious professor, who seems to have been only a ritualist at best, professed his strict adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel, and his punctual performance of its duties, without being happy at all. A Christian physician narrated his search for happiness

diligent prosecution of your labours in the field, first of all for the needful and reliable support of your existence; then you may go on to the building up of your establishment."—*O. Zöckler.*

A man should have property well realised and secured before he enters on schemes of expensive building.

b Ex. i. 21; De. xxv. 9; Ru. iv. 11.

v. 27. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 78.

"It was once said by Solon, 'No man ought to be called a happy man till he dies,' because he does not know what his life is to be; but Christians may always call themselves happy men here, because, wherever their tent is carried, they cannot pitch it where the cloud does not move, and where they are not surrounded by a circle of fire. 'I will be a wall of fire round about them, and their glory in the midst.' They cannot dwell where God is not householder, warder, and bulwark of salvation."—*Spurgeon.*

c Amer. Paper.

"As the enmity which is between eagles and dragons, the boar and the elephant, between whom it is reported there is such discord and hatred that, even when they are dead, their blood will in no wise mingle together; so envy and virtue can in

no wise agree. He that will be in favour with the envious man must needs be vicious." — *Caudray.*

in the world and in his profession in vain; how he had been led by the Scriptures to see himself a sinner, and to look to Christ as his Saviour: since which he had found peace, contentment, and joy, and had no fear of the end, which to him was but the commencement.

28, 29. (28) **without cause**, *i.e.* without pressing necessity.[a] One of the weaknesses of Eastern people is their readiness to witness, and to witness anything that may be desired. This makes the conduct of courts of justice in India exceedingly difficult. **deceive**, better read as interrogative. "Wilt thou deceive with thy lips?"[b] (29) **as . . to me**, the expression of the spirit of *revenge*, or retaliation,[c] ch. xx. 22.

Retaliation (*v.* 29).—I. The real spirit of it is one of revenge. II. The pretence is justice. III. The golden rule is, do as you would be done by, not as you would be done unto. IV. Suppose God were to deal with you as you deal with one another. V. Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven. See the Lord's parable of the wicked servant, who, being forgiven, forgave not his fellow-servant.

A murder prevented.—A pious minister, travelling by coach to a neighbouring village, engaged in conversation with his fellow-travellers. After conversing on a variety of subjects, more or less serious, the subject of revenge was introduced. Every one was anxious to give his opinion. "Not to be avenged is cowardice," said one. "The best revenge," said another, "is to despise one's enemy, and hate him, without doing him any harm." The minister, in his turn, begged to be allowed to give his opinion. "Messieurs," said he, "let us consult, before all, the Word of God;" and opening his Testament, he read the words, "Avenge not yourselves;" "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;" "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," Rom. xii. 19—21. From these verses he pointed out how odious and criminal a thing it was to take vengeance. Afterwards, feeling encouraged by the attention of his auditors, he showed how truly great and noble it was to forgive an enemy. He spoke also of Jesus Christ, and His compassion for sinners. His voice rose by degrees: his words found their way to the heart; his arguments were irresistible. When he finished speaking, a profound silence ensued, which no one ventured to break. Suddenly a young lady, who during the whole of the journey had appeared to be deeply absorbed in thought, rose, drew out a poignard, which was concealed under her gown, and, approaching the minister, said, with much emotion, "Monsieur, you see this blade; it was about to pierce the heart of my husband; I was going to find that faithless one; I was desirous of avenging myself; I have heard you, God be thanked! You have saved two victims;" and, throwing away the poignard, she added, "There is the effect of your words."

30, 31. (30) **slothful**, Pr. xii. 24. **vineyard**, more specific description of the field. Vineyards depend for their fruitfulness upon constant care and attention. **void of understanding**, a fitting description of the slothful man, for he has no wise, sober, thoughtful estimate of the responsibilities of life. (31) **thorns**, not weeds, as with us.[a] **nettles**, or brambles. Lit. "what one may not touch." **stone wall**,[b] wh. defends vineyards from the beasts

a "Do not speak even truth needlessly against any, and never falsehood."—*Fausset.*

b Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 36.

c "The teacher enters his protest against vindictiveness in every form, and thus foreshadows the higher lessons of the Sermon on the Mount."—*Spk. Com.* Mat. v. 43—45; Ro. xii. 17. "If we will needs be our own carvers, and judges in our own cause, we forfeit the benefit of an appeal to God's tribunal."—*Mat. Henry.*

vv. 28–29. *Dr. S. Clarke*, xi. 151. "When we reprove our brother we must be careful we violate not his credit. So Christ only looked upon Peter; lest, if He had spoken to him, the Jews overhearing might have reviled and upbraided Peter with his treachery to his Master. So also at supper when He reproved Judas, He spake in general terms, 'One of you.'"—*Philip Henry.*

a "Travellers call attention to the minute accuracy of the description, as illustrated by the fact that, in the richer soils of Palestine, it is

The fool's vineyard (*vv.* 30—32).—I. The scene shows us that if we will not have flowers and fruit we shall certainly have thorns and nettles. We simply cannot do nothing. 1. A man may resolve not to cultivate his mind: 2. A man may resolve not to cultivate his moral nature. II. The scene shows that the sluggard and the fool cannot hide the results of their neglect. 1. We cannot confine the results of a wasted life within our own bounds; 2. This being the case, we have not a right to do with what we call our own as we please. III. The scene shows how possible it is to be right in some particulars, and to be grievously wrong in others. IV. The scene shows that even the worst abuses may be turned to good account. Look around and you will see—1. That the finest possessions may be wasted: 2. That wickedness always moves in the direction of destruction.[c]

Idleness.—I would have every one lay to heart, that a state of idleness is a state of damnable sin. Idleness is directly repugnant to the great ends of God, both in our creation and redemption. As to our creation: can we imagine that God, who created not anything but for some excellent end, should create man for none, or for a silly one? The spirit within us is an active and vivacious principle; our rational faculties capacitate and qualify us for doing good: this is the proper work of reason, the truest and most natural pleasure of a rational soul. Who can think now, that our wise Creator lighted this candle within us, that we might oppress and stifle it by negligence and idleness? that He contrived and destined such a mind to squander and fool away its talents in vanity and impertinence? As to our redemption, it is evident both what the design of it is, and how opposite idleness is to it. Christ gave Himself for us. "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." . . . How little, then, can a useless and barren life answer the expectations of God! What a miserable return must it be to the blood of His Son; and how utterly must it disappoint all the purposes of His Word and Spirit![d]

32—34. (33) **little sleep,** *comp.* ch. vi. 10, 11. (34) **one that travelleth,** *i.e.* it may be some time on the journey, but it will surely arrive at last. **want,** or wants; thy deficits, or pecuniary embarrassments. **armed man,** "it will seize you as with the grasp of an indignant warrior. From its iron clutch there will be no deliverance." Or as a highwayman that will strip you of all you have.[a]

Practical views of human life (*v.* 32).—Unless we have a profitable manner of studying human life there will be a miserable, dreadful waste of our thought, time, talking. How have we profited as servants of God by what we have seen of men? In order to profit—1. Let not observing be merely of the nature of speculation; 2. Let not observing be conducted with prejudice and arrogance; 3. Or for the sake of taking pleasure in perceiving what is wrong in man; 4. Or that the effect may be that we take more pleasure in ourselves; 5. Think of the probable difference between our judgments of the persons we look upon, and their own judgments of themselves; 6. In observing mankind we perceive to a great extent a sad deprivation or deficiency of conscience; 7. How temptation operates and prevails; 8. The great errors, the lapses of good men; 9. The effect of situation and circumstance.[b]

thorny shrubs, of wh. twenty-two kinds are enumerated, that are specially quick to spring up, and overspread a neglected field."—See *Hackett, etc.*

b Is. v. 5. "Morally this vineyard may signify our spiritual natures, with all their faculties and potential powers, and which it is both our manifest interest and our bounden duty to cultivate."—*David Thomas, D.D.*

c Dr. Parker.

"A favourite illustration among the Arabs of extreme idleness is the man that would not turn his head over on his pillow, though the muddy water leaking through the roof fell plump into his eye."—*Dr. Thomson.*

d Lucas.

a "Even the sluggard's garden brought forth fruit—but not for the sluggard's benefit. The diligent man reaped and carried off the only harvest that it bore—a warning."—*Arnot.*

vv. 30—34. *E. Bather,* iii. 404; *F. Elwin,* ii. 201.

v. 32. *J. Foster,* ii. 29.

b J. Foster.

"Pythagoras, being asked what he was, answered that if Hiero were ever at the Olympian games, he knew the manner—that some came to try their

Great harm of idleness.—

What heart can think, or tongue express,
The harm that groweth of idleness!

This idleness in some of us
Is seen to seem a thing but slight;
But if that sum the sums discuss,
The total sum doth show us straight
This idleness to weigh such weight
That it no tongue can well express,
The harm that groweth of idleness.

This vice I liken to a weed
That husbandmen have named tyne,
The which in corn doth root or breed;
The grain to ground it doth incline—
It never ripeth, but rotteth in fine;
And even a like thing is to guess
Against all virtue, idleness.

The proud man may be patient,
The ireful may be liberal,
The gluttonous may be continent,
The covetous may give alms all,
The lecher may to prayer fall;
Each vice hideth some good business,
Save only idle idleness.

As some one virtue may by grace
Suppress of vices many a one,
So is one vice once taken place
Destroyeth all virtues every one;
Where this vice cometh all virtues are gone,
In no kind of good business
Can company with idleness.

An ill wind that bloweth no man good,
The blower of which blast is she;
The lither lusts bred of her brood
Can no way breed good property;
Wherefore I say, as we now see,
No heart can think, or tongue express
The harm that groweth of idleness!

To cleanse the corn, as men at need
Weed out all weeds, and tyne for chief,
Let diligence, our weed-hook, weed
All vice from us for like relief;
As faith may faithfully show proof
By faithful fruitful business,
To weed out fruitless idleness.[c]

fortune for the prizes, and some came as merchants to utter their commodities, and some came to make good cheer and meet their friends, and some came to look on; and that he was one of them that came to look on. But men must know that, in this theatre of man's life, it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers-on." — *Lord Bacon.*

"Idleness is the mother of unquietness, disorder, and curiosity; sacrilegious in religion, dangerous in science, damnable as to future things, seditious in affairs of State, contrary to the quiet of families, and shameful and infamous to those who are possessed with it." — *J. Beaumont.*

"Idleness is very dangerous to those that are rich, and feel no want in this life; for, while they gives themselves to it, voluptuousness overcomes reason, and they are snared in the deadly traps and deceits of the world, and are poisoned with carnal pleasures and fleshly delights, which are enjoyable for a little while, but at length leave them to shame and confusion." —*Cawdray.*

c J. Heywood.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1. these, *etc.*, the formula indicating a new section; the fourth division of the book. Sol. is said to have spoken 3,000 proverbs.[a] Some of these he collected himself; but from them a later selection seems to have been made for definitely moral

a 1 Ki. iv. 32; Ec. xii. 9.

b "Prob. both the written and the oral tradition

and religious purposes. copied out,[b] they may have been kept as oral tradition, or in known documents; the expression here means that they gained practical and permanent form. The *men of Hezekiah* were prob. a learned commission entrusted by the king with the work of recovering, and editing, the ancient national literature.

Reading the Bible.—M. De Renty, a French nobleman, used to read daily three chapters of the Bible, with his head uncovered and on his bended knees. Lady Francis Hobart read the Psalms over twelve times a year, the New Testament thrice, and the other parts of the Old Testament once. Susannah, Countess of Suffolk, for the last seven years of her life read the whole Bible over twice annually. Dr. Gouge used to read fifteen chapters every day,—five in the morning, five after dinner, and five in the evening before going to bed. Mr. Jeremiah Whittaker usually read all the Epistles in the Greek Testament twice every fortnight. Joshua Barnes is said to have read a small pocket Bible which he usually carried about him, a hundred and twenty times over. Mr. Robert Cotton read the whole Bible through twelve times a year. The Rev. Mr. Romaine studied nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life. A poor prisoner, being confined in a dark dungeon, had no light, except for a few moments when his food was brought to him. He used to take his Bible and read a chapter, saying he could find his mouth in the dark when he could not read. Henry Willis, farmer, aged eighty-one, devoted every hour that could be spared from his labour during the course of so long a life to the devout and serious perusal of the Holy Scriptures. He had read with the most minute attention all the books of the Old and New Testaments eight times over, and had proceeded as far as the Book of Job in his ninth reading, when his meditations were terminated by death.[c]

2, 3. (2) to conceal, or that He must conceal. God does not hide in order to show His glory: but His glory is so great that it must be incomprehensible.[a] "After the fullest revelation there are secrets unrevealed." honour of kings, as occupying positions of authority and influence, and yet being but limited in mental power and in knowledge. search out, so that the materials of sound judgment may be before them.[b] (3) heaven, *etc.*, better read, "Of the heaven for height, etc., there is no searching out:" *i.e.* there is a sense in wh. kings are *like*, as well as unlike, God. They should be like Him in the power to keep secrets.

Divine concealments (*v.* 2).—I. The Divine Being is accustomed to conceal much—1. In relation to His own nature and the manner of His existence; 2. In relation to the structure and constitution of His works; 3. In relation to the dispensations of His providence: 4. In relation to the economy of grace and redemption. II. In this He acts in a manner worthy of Himself, and suited to display His glory. 1. Because it is in part the necessary consequence of His infinite superiority to all finite beings in wisdom and understanding—the inevitable result of His being God: 2. Because it evinces His entire independence of the wisdom, counsel, or co-operation of any or all of His creatures; 3. Because such a degree of obscurity as attends the partial manifestation of the Divine will, and the progressive development of

were alike sifted for the objects of the collection."—*O. Zöckler.*

"I would rather call the Book of Proverbs Solomonian than actually a work of Solomon's. So I apprehend many of the Psalms to be Davidical only, not David's own compositions."—*Coleridge.*

"A man of maxims only is like a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head."—*Coleridge.*

c Bib. Soc. Record.

"Old Howell has admirably described the ingredients of an exquisite proverb to be sense, shortness, and salt."—*Disraeli.*

a De. xxix. 29; Ps. xviii. 11; lxxvii. 19; Job xxvi. 14; Ro. xi. 33; 1 Ti. vi. 16. "God's glory is seen not only in what He reveals, but in what He conceals—a profound observation, which is the best answer to many sceptical objections to Divine revelation."—*Wordsworth.*

b "In God's government we are not to be wise, and wish to know why, but believe everything; but in the secular kingdom a ruler should know, and ask why, and trust no man in anything!"—*Luther.*

v. 2. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 548; *R. Hall*, vi. 24.

the Divine purposes, is eminently adapted to the state, exigency, and condition of man.[c]

4, 5. (4) **dross**, or impurities wh. would spoil the consistency and the beauty of the silversmith's workmanship. Fire is the agent used in this process. **a vessel**, or the proper materials of a vessel.[a] (5) **from before the king**, the expression intimates, from his place beside the king, as a king's counsellor. **established**, made stable, permanent. **righteousness**, esp. of judicial decisions.[b]

Evil surroundings (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. Of the silver, it is the dross with which it is naturally associated; of the king, the mean souls that bask in the royal favour. II. The separation is a fiery process. In the case of kings, private assassination, intrigue, revolution, or legitimate party contests. III. The separation from the dross is beneficial both to the silver and to the king. IV. Men, looking at the silver mixed with the dross, and at the king in the midst of a vile court, are apt to misjudge both the metal and the man: separation is needful to rectify opinion.

"*It is pleasant floating.*"—Three young men, bathing one sunny day in a beautiful river, allowed themselves to float downward toward a waterfall some distance below. At length two of them made for the shore, and to their alarm found that the current was stronger than they had supposed. They immediately hailed the other, and urged him also to seek the shore. But he smiled at their fears, and floated on. "It is pleasant floating!" he said, and seemed to enjoy it much. Soon several persons were gathered on the bank of the river, and, alarmed for his safety, they cried out in deep earnestness, "Make for the shore, make for the shore, or you will certainly go over!" But he still floated on, laughing at their fears. Soon he saw his danger, and exerted his utmost energies to gain the bank. But alas! it was too late! The current was too strong. He cried for help, but no help could reach him. His mind was filled with anguish, and just as he reached the fearful precipice, he threw himself up with arms extended, gave an unearthly shriek, and then was plunged into the boiling abyss below.

6, 7. (6) **put . . thyself**, Heb. *set not out thy glory.*[a] Reproof of over-forwardness, self-assertion, and boastful ambition. **stand . . great**, *i.e.* assuming that you are as great as they.[b] (7) **come up hither**, *comp.* Lu. xiv. 8—11.[c] **eyes have seen**, into whose presence thou hast gained admittance.[d]

Obtrusiveness (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. To force oneself upon the notice of great men betrays a want of self-respect. II. It is the true mark of a toady and sycophant. III. The man of worth will be recognised in due time, and elevated according to his merits; if not, the loss will be that of others. IV. Those who have not the eyes to perceive worth have not the will or the heart to reward it.

Politeness.—True politeness is not wholly made up of graceful manners and courtly conversation, and a strict adherence to the rules of fashion, however agreeable these may be. It is something less superficial than these accomplishments. Genuine courtesy grows out of an assiduous self-denial and a constant consideration of the happiness of others. The forms and usages

c G. Brooks.

a "As, in order to the production of a beautiful vessel, such as the finer would approve and command, the material of wh. the vessel is to be made must be purged of its alloy, so, in order to the general government of a prince being of a nature to prove conducive to the benefit of his people, and the stability of his throne, the wicked must be removed from his presence, and fr. all intimacy with his life and counsels."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b "God will bless his government, the people will become pliable to it, and so it will prove durable."—*Matt. Henry.*

vv. 4, 5. *Dr. Delaney*, 301.

a "Bring not thy glory to view; make not thyself glorious."—*Stier.*

b "Do not vie with them in apparel, furniture, gardens, housekeeping, or retinue, for that is an affront to them, and will waste thine own estate."—*Mat. Henry.*

c "Sit not in a place fr. wh. one may bid thee rise up."—*Arabic Prov.*

d 2 Sa. xiv. 24, 28.

"Pride has a fall,

of etiquette derive all their beauty and significance from the fact that each of them requires the sacrifice of one's own ease and convenience to another's comfort. St. Paul, who, before Felix and Agrippa, and even when the object of the abuse and insult of the Jewish mob, showed what should be the conduct of a true gentleman, has included all of refinement in these few words, "In honour preferring one another." How noble does the same principle appear in the words of the chivalrous Sir Philip Sidney, who, when he lay wounded on the battle-field and was offered a cup of cold water, motioned it to a suffering soldier at his side, and said, "This man's necessity is greater than mine!"

8—10. (8) **hastily**, *i.e.* without due consideration and forethought. **strive**, reference is mainly intended to cases in the law-courts, or before the magistrates.[a] **what to do**, *i.e.* what humiliating or what terrible thing thou mayest be compelled at last to do. (9) **debate**, *etc.*, settle the matter of dispute in private and friendly conference. Try to end the matter amicably. **to another**, or the secret of another. This being often the occasion of dispute and difficulty.[b] (10) **he that heareth**, *i.e.* the one whose secret is thus betrayed.

Quarrelsomeness (*vv.* 8—10).—I. The quarrelsome man rushes into strife without thinking of the consequences, being borne along by a tempest of passion. II. His passion prevents him from seeing the merits of his neighbour's case or the injustice of his own. III. His passion leads to hastiness of speech, and the revealing of private matters. IV. The result is that the natural justice of even imperfect men declaims against the passionate man.

A good temper.—The Duke of Marlborough possessed great command of temper, and never permitted it to be ruffled by little things, in which even the greatest men have been occasionally found unguarded. As he was one day riding with Commissary Marriot, it began to rain, and he called to his servant for his cloak. The servant not bringing it immediately, he called for it again. The servant being embarrassed with the straps and buckles, did not come up to him. At last, it raining very hard, the duke called to him again, and asked him what he was about that he did not bring his cloak. "You may stay, sir," grumbled the fellow, "if it rains cats and dogs, till I can get at it." The duke turned round to Marriot, and said, very coolly, "Now I would not be of that fellow's temper for all the world."[c]

11, 12. (11) **fitly spoken**, *Heb.* appears to mean, *upon his wheels*, *i.e.* moving quickly and quietly on its way: but better trans., *in due season:* spoken in its appropriate time. **apples of gold**,[a] allusion is plainly to some familiar and admired kind of ornamentation, whether of sculpture or of table decoration does not appear. **pictures**, or framework; setting. (12) **as an earring**, *etc.*, the point of this verse may be thus expressed, "An ear that listens obediently to instruction and reproof[b] is more valuably adorned than that wh. is ornamented with the most costly jewels." "The listening ear is better than one hung with gold."

Well-chosen words (*v.* 11).—I. They raise our estimation of the speaker. II. They do good to the hearer. III. They are the

and it is wiser as well as nobler to take the lower place at first in humility, than to take it afterwards with shame."—*Sel. Com.*

v. 6. *E. Gallatin*, 291.

a "Rush not forth soon to quarrel."—*Luther.*

b "The point may, however, be, Do not talk to others about any secret evils you may hear of. Let the man who first listens to the offence be the man who has given it; drop it into no other ear. If you trumpet the offence in the ear of another before you meet the offender, you have done the offender a wrong, and exposed yourself to a lasting disgrace."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Mat. xviii. 15.

"If religion has done nothing for your temper, it has done nothing for your soul."—*Clayton.*

c R. T. S.

a "Either real apples of golden colour, in a silver net-work basket, or imitations on silver embroidery."—*Fausset.*

"Under the term we are to understand some such thing as sculptured work for the decoration of ceilings, pillared galleries, etc., wh.

exhibits golden apples on a groundwork of silver."—*C. Zöckler.*

"Words make truth to spangle, and its rays to shine."—*J. Bunyan.*

b "If you be reproved for your faults, do not be angry with him who does it, but turn your anger against the things for which he has reproved you."—*Quoted by Nicholls.*

v. 11. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 520.

v. 12. *P. Holland,* i. 193.

"You may tame the wild beast; the conflagration of the American forest will cease when all the timber and the dry wood is consumed; but you cannot arrest the progress of that cruel word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning."—*F. W. Robertson.*

c Miss Brewster.

utterance of wisdom, tact, sympathy, practical knowledge. IV. For the speaking of them we need a heart under the teaching of the spirit of wisdom, and then "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak."

The power of a word; or, unconscious influence.—One day a boy was tormenting a kitten, when his little sister said to him with tearful eyes, "Oh, Philip, don't do that; it's God's kitten." The words of the little one were not lost: they were set upon wheels. Many serious thoughts were awakened in his mind regarding the creature he had before considered his own property. "God's kitten—God's creature—for He made it." It was a new idea. The next day, on his way to school, he met one of his companions, beating unmercifully a poor starved-looking dog. "Don't do that," said Philip, using almost unconsciously his sister's words; "it is God's creature." The boy looked ashamed, and explained that the dog had stolen his breakfast. "Never mind," said Philip, "I will give you mine, which I have in my basket;" and sitting down together, the little boy's anger was soon forgotten. Again had a word unconsciously been set upon wheels. Two passers-by had heard Philip's words,—one a young man in prosperous business in the neighbouring town; the other a dirty, ragged being, who, in consequence of his intemperate habits, had been dismissed by his employer, and was now going home, sullen and despairing. "God's creature," said the poor forlorn man, and it was a new idea to him also; "if I, too, belong to God, He will take care of me, though no one else will." Just then he came to a public-house, where he had been in the habit of drowning his miseries, and then staggering home to inflict new ones on his wife and children. He stopped; the temptation was strong, but the new idea was stronger—"I am God's creature;" and he passed on. His wife was astonished to see him sober, and still more when he burst into tears, declared that he was a ruined man, but that he was determined to give up drinking, and trust in God. At that moment a knock was heard at the door, and the gentleman came in to whom we have before alluded. He, too, had been rebuked by the boy's words for the scorn and loathing which he had felt to the miserable object before him. "'God's creature,' therefore entitled to help and pity." He had gone to help the poor man; and all this the result of a little girl's words to her brother.*c*

13, 14. (13) **cold . . harvest,** not snow-storm in harvest-time, wh. would be anything but pleasant. Reference is to snow brought from the mountains, and used as we use *ice*, to cool wine, and other drinks.*a* **faithful messenger,** one whom his master can fully trust.*b* (14) **false gift,** or promise. Reference is to one who is ever boasting how much he will do, yet never fulfilling his boast.*c* **without rain,** wh. the clouds and the wind seemed so plainly to promise.

Refreshing words (*vv.* 13, 14).—I. Picture the heated and exhausted harvestman. He thirsts: the best drink for such a one not exciting beverages, but cold water—

> It cooleth the brow, it cooleth the brain,
> It maketh the faint one strong again,
> Then water for me, cold water for me,
> 'Tis the drink of the wise, 'tis the wine of the free.

The man drinks or bathes, and is refreshed. II. Picture one

a "The king's summer-palace on Lebanon would make him and his courtiers familiar with a luxury wh. could hardly have been accessible at Jerusalem."—*Spk. Com.*

b Pr. x. 26, xiii. 17, xxii. 21.

c "A more contemptible character know I not than the man of a mean and das-

awaiting the return of a messenger. Thus—time of war, camp in hostile country (as now in Zululand), will the message be that a relieving force is on the way? Or, sick man in danger, sends for doctor, will the message arrive in time? III. From such illustrations let those who are employed as messengers be swift and faithful. Apply to children. IV. Let all teachers and preachers be faithful messengers of God—take the message promptly, faithfully.

A boy's fidelity.—A lady who had interested herself much on the behalf of some navvies embarking for the seat of war in the Crimea, had purchased four warm knitted vests for them, but had no means of getting them conveyed to the vessel on board which her poor shivering friends had embarked. Who was to take the much-needed articles of clothing to the vessel? Says she:—"Beneath a lamp in the street stood a group of boys. Its light fell on a face which seemed to introduce the sort of messenger I desired. The story was told him. 'Now, my boy, we are strangers, and I do not want to know your name, or where you live, nor any clue to either. You might take these vests, and make twenty shillings upon them, or give them away to your father and brothers if you chose. I should never send the police after you. But my confidence in the honour of English boys, which stands so high now, would be broken down. And those two nobly honest men would suffer, and might take cold, and go into a consumption and die, and their wives and children break their hearts about them.' The boy's eyes flashed under the lamp-light, and, snatching the parcel, he said, 'Trust me, I'm the boy for it.' Eighteen-pence happened to be the worldly all we had with us, after paying for the vests. I told him how sorry I was for this; but that it would pay his boat each way, and he would have sixpence and a happy heart to lie down with at night. 'It's a plenty. Father's a waterman. I shall get his boat for nothing. All's right,' and off he ran. A note had been enclosed in the parcel to one of the officers with whom I had had some conversation, requesting him to send me one line by post that night, or next morning, to say that the parcel had reached its destined owners. The next day passed, and the next, but no letter came from the *Jura*. We read in the *Times* that she had sailed on Thursday morning. The day posts of Saturday arrived, but brought no news of the parcel. My trust failed. 'My boy is dishonest,' I said, 'and my confidence in human honour can never be the same again.' But by the last post on Saturday evening came a note from the officer alluded to, to say that about seven o'clock on Wednesday evening a boy had taken a parcel on board, and had requested permission to deliver it to the two men in the presence of the captain of the ship, the chief officer of the corps, and the medical officer. Having discharged his duty, the last sound heard amidst the splashing of his oars, as he left the ship's side, was the shout, 'Tell that 'ere lady that I kept my word, and the jackets was in time.'"

15—17. (15) **long forbearing**, this prevails bec. anger seldom has the power of continuance: it fades with time, and gives the patient their opportunity. **soft tongue**, winning, gentle speech.[a] **breaketh the bone**, fig. for "subdues even the most obstinate resistance." (16) **vomit**, an over-quantity

tardly selfish nature wearing the livery and speaking the language of love, with one hand dropping a farthing into the 'urn of poverty,' and with the other taking a shilling out."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Be what thou wouldest seem to be.

"The earth with its scarred face is the symbol of the past; the air and heaven of futurity."—*Coleridge.*

"If a man be sincerely wedded to truth, he must make up his mind to find her a portionless virgin, and he must take her for herself alone. The contract, too, must be to love, cherish, and obey her, not only until death, but beyond it, for this is a union that must survive not only death, but time, the conqueror of death."—*Colton.*

The poet Tennyson has the following motto in encrusted tiles on the pavement of his entrance hall: "*Y Gwyr yn Erbyn y byd*,"—the truth against the world.

a Pr. xv. 1; Ec x. 4; Ja. i. 19.

b Over-indulgence in any worldly pleasure

issues in a moral sickness and disgust. There is what the French call the *ennui* that comes out of it, "that awful yawn," says Byron, "which sleep cannot abate."

c "Visit seldom and they love thee the more." —*Arabic Prov.*

"After the third day fish and company become distasteful. Be not too intimate with any."—*Lat. Prov.*

"He that sponges upon a friend loses him."—*Eng. Prov.*

v. 15. *Bp. Wilkins*, 359.

v. 16. *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 245; *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 278.

a Diminutive, *mallet.*

b "Nitre does not mean the salt so called by us saltpetre, but rather an alkaline substance, wh. was called by the Romans *nitrum*, and wh., in a particular state of preparation, was used in Judæa for soap. Vinegar, or any other acid, poured on this substance, would, from the want of chemical affinity between them, produce effervescence; and this appears to be the similitude intended — the want of affinity between the song of mirth and the spirit of heaviness."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"It is easy to exclude the noontide light by closing the eyes; and it is easy to resist

even of that wh. is sweet and good becomes an offence.[b] (17) withdraw, *etc.*, *i.e.* do not give even your friend and neighbour so much of your company as may weary him of you.[c]

Homiletic hints (*vv.* 15—17).—Verse 15 may suggest a sermon on the patient endurance of injuries, or the appeasing of passion by silence; verse 16, on the possibility of having too much of a good thing; and verse 17, on the abuses of friendship.

The physician and the drayman.—Dr. P——, a Quaker of Philadelphia, was very kind to the poor. In times of sickness, produced by whatever cause, he was always ready to assist them. His benevolence in such cases extended farther than his gratuitous services as a physician. Of course he was beloved. The streets were frequently somewhat crowded with building materials, so much so as often, at particular places, to prevent two vehicles from passing each other, if the driver of either was disposed to be obstinate. As the doctor was one day proceeding to visit a patient, his progress was impeded by a dray—the driver of which had stopped his horses in one of those narrow passages. After waiting several minutes the doctor requested the drayman to allow him to pass. The latter, who had heard of the former, but did not know him, poured forth a volley of the vilest abuse upon the "straight-coat," and swore that he would not move till he thought proper. "Well, friend," said the doctor, "all I have to observe is this: if thee should get sick, or if thy family should ever be in distress, send for Dr. P——, and he will do all he can to assist thee." The heart of the drayman was subdued by the kindness of the man he had abused; he was ashamed of his conduct, stammered an apology, and then removed the obstruction as speedily as possible.

18—20. (18) false witness, *comp.* Pr. vi. 19, xii. 17, xix. 5, 9, xxi. 28. maul, *etc.*,[a] a crushing instrument: a club shod with iron. "An instrument used in the rough and bloody warfare of fighting men in old times. swords, *etc.*, comp. Ps. lii. 4, lvii. 5, lxiv. 4, cxx. 4. (19) broken tooth, or one ready to break; wh. gives a terrible twinge of pain when used in biting. foot . . joint, sprained, so that every step is an agony. "Treachery annoys as well as deceives." (20) taketh away, better, "layeth aside." nitre,[b] or potash. Some take the Heb. word to mean, "a wound."

The miseries of false friendship (*v.* 19).—I. Describe the unfaithful man. He is often ready to promise more than you desire, or than he can perform. II. Confidence in him attended with doubt. III. And attended with pain. Like trying to masticate with broken tooth, or walking with a sprained ankle. —*The song and the heart* (*v.* 20).—I. Describe the heavy heart. It may be made heavy—*i.e.* sad—by sin, sorrow, etc. II. The singer, because he can sing, is a reminder of happiness possessed by another. III. The song that is sung may remind of other and better days. The tune and the sentiment may stir old memories.

Friendship in the East.—The respect which children often show for the companions and friends of their father is very striking. See a man in distress; he goes to the sons of his deceased friend; he repeats numerous instances of the assistance which he had received from their father: he is quite sure, were he now alive, his requests would be granted. A person in great

difficulty seldom seeks for relief from his own brothers or relations. No; he will tell his story to any one, suffer almost anything, rather than apply to near relations. Widows, too, will go for assistance to strangers in preference to the relations of their late husbands.[c]

21, 22. (21) **be hungry**, Ro. xii. 20.[a] (22) **heap coals**, *etc.*,[b] *i.e.* "As metals are melted by heaping coals upon them, so is the heart softened by kindness."

Returning good for evil (*vv.* 21, 22).—I. The duty inculcated. 1. By nature we are all inclined to render evil for evil: 2. But religion requires us to render good for evil. II. The encouragement given us to perform it. 1. That we shall overcome the hatred of our enemy: 2. That we shall be rewarded of our God. Apply:—(1) Guard against those reasonings which favour the indulgence of a vindictive spirit; (2) Set the Lord Jesus before you as an example.[c]

Power of kindness.—When I was in Cambridge Master George Stafford read a lecture there,—I heard him,—and in expounding the Epistle to the Romans, coming to that place where St. Paul saith that "we shall overcome our enemy with well-doing, and so heap up hot coals upon his head," now, in expounding that place, he brought in an example, saying that he knew in London a great rich merchant, who had a very poor neighbour, yet for all his poverty, he loved him very well, and lent him money at his need, and let him come to his table whensoever he would. It was at the time when Doctor Colet (Dean of St. Paul's, and founder of St. Paul's School) was in trouble, and would have been burnt, if God had not turned the king's heart to the contrary. Now the rich man began to be a Scripture man, he began to perceive the Gospel; the poor man was a papist still. It chanced on a time, when the rich man talked of the Gospel, sitting at his table, where he reproved popery and such kind of things, the poor man being then present, took a great displeasure against the rich man; insomuch that he would come no more to his house, he would borrow no more money of him, as he was wont to do beforetimes; yea, and he conceived such hatred and malice against him, that he went and accused him before the bishops. Now the rich man, not knowing any such displeasure, offered many times to talk with him, and to set him at quiet; but it would not be, the poor man had such a stomach, that he would not vouchsafe to speak with him: if he met the rich man in the street, he would go out of his way. One time it happened that he met him in so narrow a street that he could not avoid, but must come near him: yet for all that, this poor man had such a stomach against the rich man, I say, that he was minded to go forward, and not to speak with him. The rich man, perceiving that, caught him by the hand, and asked him, saying, "Neighbour, what is come into your heart to take such displeasure with me? what have I done against you? tell me, and I will be ready at all times to make you amends." Finally, he spake so gently, so charitably, so lovingly, and friendly, that it wrought in the poor man's heart, so that by-and-by he fell down upon his knees and asked him forgiveness. The rich man forgave him, and took him again to his favour, and they loved as well as ever they did before. Many a one would have said—Set him in the stocks; let him have bread of affliction, and water of tribulation; but this man

the clearest truth by hardening the heart against it."—*Keith.*

c Roberts.

a Mat. v. 44.

b "The fig. is designed to describe rather the deep pangs of repentance wh. one produces within his enemy by rewarding his hatred with benefits, and in the production of wh. the revenge to be taken on him may consist, simply and solely."—*O. Zöckler.*

"The first emotion caused by the good we do may be one of burning shame, but the shame will do its work, and the heart also will burn, and prayer, and confession, and thanksgiving will rise as incense to the throne of God."—*Spk. Com.*

"We are the disciples of Him who died for His enemies."—*Bp. Wilson.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

When the first warrant for execution was presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria to sign, she burst into tears. Lord Melbourne said:—"Your majesty knows that you have the prerogative of mercy." "Then," she replied, "let the sentence be changed to transportation for life."

"Merciful and kind as a forgiving God."—*Dryden.*

did not so. And here you see an example of the practice of God's words, so that the poor man, bearing great hatred and malice against the rich man, was brought, through the lenity and meekness of the rich man, from his error and wickedness, to the knowledge of God's Word.[d]

d Latimer.

23, 24. (23) driveth away, should be, as marg., "bringeth forth rain."[a] backbiting,[b] or slandering. (24) better, *etc.*, comp. ch. xxi. 9, 19.

a The N.W. wind in Palestine commonly brings rain.

Silenced by a look (*v.* 23).—I. Consider the simile employed,—north wind, fierce, strong; scatters and breaks up the shower, disperses it; dries the ground where it has fallen: so the cold, indignant glance of a just and true-hearted man will cow the slanderer; this it is to be angry and sin not. II. The reason is, as the rain is weak to resist the wind, so the slanderer is usually a coward, no cohesion in his statements, etc.

b A backbiter is a clandestine traducer of character. His speech goes to damage another's reputation behind his back.

A word in season.—In Shropshire, England, some years ago, a number of acquaintances and friends had assembled to spend a social evening together. In the course of the evening they resolved to have a dance, and prevailed on Michael Onions, at whose house they were, to go out a distance of two miles to procure a fiddler for them. On his way he met a stranger, who, having missed the road, requested Michael to direct him to Madeley. The stranger ascertained the errand on which Onions was going, and began to talk with him about his soul, showing him the unsuitableness of such follies to a dying man, his need of salvation and personal interest in Christ, and his awful danger as an unsaved sinner. When the stranger left Michael, the conversation had so impressed him, that he dared not proceed on his errand, but returned to his home. When he opened the door, his friends inquired: "Have you brought the fiddler?" He answered, "No." "Is he not at home? Have you been at Brosely?" "No." "Why, what is the matter? You look ill, and are all of a tremble?" Michael then told them that he met somebody, but whether a man or angel he could not tell; he never before heard such a man. He repeated what had been said to him on spiritual subjects, and added: "I dare not go to Brosely; I would not for the world." The party was broken up. The next Sabbath, Michael and some of his friends attended Madeley Church, and there, in Rev. John Fletcher, the new vicar, he recognised the stranger who had conversed with him. The impression wrought on Michael was lasting in its character, and, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, led to his conversion. He became a zealous, devoted, and useful Christian. "A word spoken in due season, how good it is!"

"You may depend upon it that a slight contrast of character is very material to happiness in marriage."—*Coleridge.*

"The man's desire is for the woman; but the woman's desire is rarely other than for the desire of the man."—*Ibid.*

"A woman's friendship borders more closely on love than man's. Men affect each other in the reflection of noble or friendly acts; while women ask fewer proofs, and more signs and expressions of attachment."—*Ibid.*

Slander is a coward's revenge, dissimulation his defence.

a Spk. Com.

b Stier.

25, 26. (25) good news, of those so far away that we cannot have personal intercourse with them, and only at long intervals communications fr. them. "The words remind us of the scanty intercourse in the whole world between wanderers and the home they had left."[a] (26) troubled, or disturbed, so that clearness of the water is lost. corrupt, by admission to it of something foul. falling down, *etc.*, by yielding to the bad influence and persuasions of the wicked,[b] failing where we expected to find steadfastness.

"Beware of backsliding. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven. No plants, if they rot, become more offensive and pernicious than those which once

Good news (*v.* 25).—Cold water to a thirsty traveller, to a wounded soldier, to a sick child. Good news concerning the

prosperity of a friend; concerning the safe arrival of a merchant ship; concerning a victory. Apply the Proverb to the Gospel. I. The far country—heaven. Far on account of—1. Its distance from this world; as a place it is separated from us by a local distance untraversed and unmeasured, but vast: 2. Its remoteness from our apprehensions; it differs so widely from all we have hitherto experienced, that we can conceive of it but dimly, even with the aid of revelation; 3. Our legal and moral disqualifications for inhabiting it. II. The good news—1. Of an answer to man's deepest questionings. There are certain inquiries of a religious import which naturally occur to us as soon as we arrive at the age of reflection: 2. Of a remedy for man's greatest ills—guilt, sin, sorrow; 3. Of a realisation of man's highest hopes, the perfection of his being. III. The resemblance. 1. It satisfies a want; 2. It imparts a pleasure; 3. It communicates strength.[c]

Good news.—Rejoice at the news: glad tidings and sad hearts do not well together. When we see one heavy and sorrowful, we ask him what ill news he hath heard. Christian, what ill news hath Christ brought from heaven with Him, that makes thee walk with thy folded arms and pensive countenance? I am sure God intended His people's joy in the feast of the Gospel. Truly, the saints' heaviness reflects unkindly upon God Himself: we do not commend His cheer, if it doth not cheer us. The Christian's life is but a melancholy walk, thinks the carnal heart; it is a dry feast they sit at, where so little wine of joy is drunk. Oh! Christians, let the world see you are not losers in your joy; give them not cause to think, by your uncomfortable walking, that, should they turn Christians, they must bid all joy farewell. "Rejoice in the Lord alway!"[d]

27, 28. (27) **much honey**, *comp. v.* 16. **search**, *etc.*, better trans. "So to search into weighty matters is itself a weight,"[a] *i.e.* men soon become satiated with it as with honey. (28) **rule . . spirit**, ch. xvi. 32.[b] **city . . walls**, so freely exposed to all enemies.

A defenceless man (*v.* 28).—I. As a city broken down lies open to the foe, so a man who does not govern himself is an easy prey to others. II. A city without walls is a city unguarded; so an ungovernable man is one who is unwatchful, and easily overcome. Take with this verse, xvi. 32.

The power of love.—"I'll master it," said the axe, and the blows fell heavily on the iron; but every blow made his edge more blunt, till he ceased to strike. "Leave it to me," said the saw; and with his relentless teeth he worked backwards and forwards on its surface, till they were all worn down or broken; then he fell aside. "Ha! ha!" said the hammer; "I knew you wouldn't succeed. I'll show you the way;" but at his first fierce stroke off flew his head, and the iron remained as before. "Shall I try?" asked the small, soft flame. They all despised the flame; but he curled gently round the iron and embraced it, and never left it till it melted under his irresistible influence. There are hearts hard enough to resist the force of wrath, the malice of persecution, and the fury of pride, so as to make their acts recoil on their adversaries; but there is a power stronger than any of those, and hard indeed is that heart that can resist love.[e]

appeared in richest foliage and choicest flowers."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

v. 25. *A. Roberts*, i. 234.

c G. Brooks.

"Newspapers are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. To show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."—*Shakespeare.*

"A journalist is a grumbler, a censurer, a giver of advice, a regent of sovereigns, a tutor of nations. Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets."—*Napoleon I.*

d W. Gurnall.

a "Searching out honour brings difficulty."—*Bern'theau.*

"The devil never tempts us with more success than when he tempts us with a sight of our good actions."—*Bp. Wilson.*

b "Is it not evident weakness to be able to suffer nothing, to think it strength and greatness of spirit to bear nothing, to be sensible of every touch?"—*Abp. Leighton.*

Accustom yourself to self-control in matters of small moment, as a training for those of greater importance.

e Mrs. Prosser.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—3. (1) snow . . harvest, *comp.* ch. xxv. 13. In Palestine from spring to October there is little or no rain. So harvest snow (or rain) was regarded as a strange and incongruous thing. Honour paid to a fool is quite as incongruous. (2) bird, or sparrow,[a] curse causeless, unmerited; not having sufficient ground or reason. not come, on the cursed: it is suggested by the figs. that it will return home to him who cursed, as the birds do to their nests.[b] (3) whip, *etc.*, each of these is fitting to its place and use.[c]

Homiletic hints (*vv.* 1—3).—Verse 1 suggests a sermon on things out of place; verse 2, things in search of a place; verse 3, things in their right place. The three verses may be combined, and the subject may be on the fitness of things; and the application may be—I. Are we in our right place? II. Has Christ His proper place in our heart and life? III. What are we doing to secure for the Saviour His right place in the world?

Snow for cooling drinks.—At Damascus I found that snow procured from the neighbouring mountains of Anti-Lebanon is kept for sale in the bazaars. The people are accustomed to mix it with water, with the juice of pomegranates, with sherbet, and other drinks, for the sake of having a cooler beverage. I can testify that the use of such a mixture on a hot day is both agreeable and refreshing. "In the heat of the day," says Dr. Wilson, "the Jews at Hasbeia, in northern Galilee, offered us water cooled with snow from Jebel-esh-Sheikh," the modern name of Mount Hermon. In the valleys on the sides of Saunin, commonly reckoned the highest peak of Lebanon, snow remains during all the year. "Countless loads of it," says Dr. Schulz, "are brought down on the backs of mules to Beirut, and used there to freshen in some measure the water, otherwise hardly fit to drink." Nor is the use of the article confined, by any means, to the vicinity of the mountains where the snow falls. Volney quotes an Arabic writer as saying that cargoes of snow, "obtained at Damascus, used, at one period, to be shipped at Beirut and Sidon for Damietta, where they were taken into boats, and carried up the Nile to Cairo, to be lodged in cisterns for future use. Afterwards, the other mode of transportation having been discontinued, the snow was carried by land from Syria to Egypt; and so great was the traffic, that hardly a day passed when a caravan was not despatched on this business." In this practice of the East—not unknown among the Greeks and Romans—of mingling snow with their drinks, we have an obvious explanation of the above passage, which has perplexed many a reader of the English Scriptures.[d]

4, 5. (4) answer not, *etc.*,[a] do not conform yourself to his style of speech: do not bandy words with him, descending to his level. like him, showing the same spirit, as if we approved of it. (5) answer, *etc.*,[b] meet him wisely in his own way; take care so to answer as that his folly may be clearly shown.

A fool answered according to his folly.—When the Rev. J. Murray, the father of Modern Universalism, was preaching at

a "As these birds may fly where they will, and nobody cares or is the worse, so here."—*Trapp.*

b "Curses, like young chickens, always come home to roost."—*Eng. Prov.*

c "The rod is as much needed by fools, and as well suited to them, as whips and bridles are for beasts."—*Fausset.*

"Our version of the Bible is to be loved and prized for this, as for a thousand other things,—that it has preserved a purity of meaning to many terms of natural objects. Without this holdfast, our vitiated imaginations would refine away language to mere abstractions. Hence the French have lost their poetical language; and Mr. Blanco White says the same thing has happened to the Spanish."—*Coleridge.*

"The more you speak of yourself the more you are likely to lie."—*Zimmerman.*

d *Hackett.*

a Mat. vii. 6.

b "The terms in the first instance mean, 'in a foolish manner,' as is manifest from the reason given. In the second instance they mean, 'in

Newhaven, he had among his hearers Dr. Edwards, the son of the first President Edwards. Mr. Murray preached on the paternal character of God, and against the doctrine of eternal punishment. He said:—"Would any of you who are parents plunge your children into everlasting fire; and does not God love His children as well as you love yours?" Dr. Edwards rose, and asked permission to make a few remarks. He said:—"It does not seem to me that the preacher has drawn out inferences enough from his doctrine. With your permission I will assist him with his conclusions. Would any of you who are parents cast your children into the sea, and cause them to be drowned or perish? And does not God love His children as well as you do yours? And do you believe that He will ever suffer any of them to be drowned in the sea? Assuredly nobody ever was drowned in the sea or can be under the government of God. Would any of you who are parents set fire to your dwellings in the night, and cause your sleeping babe to be burned to death? And does not God love His children as well as you do yours? Therefore no one ever was consumed in a burning house, or ever will be; to suppose such a thing would be to reflect on the paternal character of God." Dr. Edwards was about to introduce some further inference, but Mr. Murray could stand it no longer. He caught his hat and left the house, and the assembly broke up. The fool had been answered according to his folly.—*Another illustration.*—A celebrated divine once met a nobleman who was a well-known profligate and scoffer, when the following conversation took place:—"Doctor," said the nobleman, "I am yours to my shoe-tie." "My lord," replied the divine, "I am yours to the ground." "Doctor, I am yours to the centre of the earth." "My lord, I am yours to the antipodes." "Doctor," said the nobleman, determined not to be outdone in this contest of courteousness. "I am yours to the lowest pit of hell." "There, my lord," said the divine, "I must leave you. So far I have answered a fool according to his folly, lest he should be wise in his own conceit; and now I answer him not according to his folly, lest I also should be like unto him."

6, 7. (6) **hand . . fool**, who cannot be trusted. **cutteth . . feet**, or he might as well have cut off the messenger's feet, for he will not get his message well carried.[a] **drinketh damage**, as Job xv. 16. (7) **legs . . equal**,[b] better, *take away the legs*, for they are as useless to him as a parable or a proverb to a fool.

Truth.—

"Then welcome, world-eyed truth!
But there are other eyes men better love
Than truth's: for when we have her she is so cold,
And proud, we know not what to do with her.
We cannot understand her, cannot teach;
She makes us love her, but she loves not us:
And quits us as she came and looks back never.
Wherefore we fly to fiction's warm embrace,
With her to relax and bask ourselves at ease;
And, in her loving and unhindering lap
Voluptuously lulled, we dream at most
On death and truth: she knows them, loves them not;
Therefore we hate them and deny them both."[c]

the manner wh. his folly requires.' This is also plain from the reason given. A foolish speech is not a rule for our imitation; nevertheless our answer must be so framed by it as to meet and repel it."—*And. Fuller.*

vv. 4, 5. *Bp. Warburton*, x. 61.

"There is no small degree of malicious craft in fixing upon a season to give a mark of enmity and ill-will; a word, a look, which at one time would make no impression, at another time wounds the heart; and, like a shaft flying with the wind, pierces deep, which, with its own natural force, would scarcely have reached the object aimed at."—*Sterne.*

a "When a message is sent by a fool's hands, he makes so many mistakes, careless or wilful, that it is like bidding him go when we have cut off his legs."—*Bridges.*

b "The legs dangle down from a lame man; so is a parable in the mouth of fools."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 7. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 523; *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 100.

"None but a fool is always right."—*Hare.*

c Bailey.

He must be a thorough fool who can learn nothing from his own folly.

d Cowper.

Truth.—

"The works of man inherit, as is just,
Their author's frailty, and return to dust;
But Truth Divine for ever stands secure,
Its head is guarded as its base is sure;
Fix'd in the rolling flood of endless years,
The pillar of th' eternal plan appears,
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,
Built by that Architect who built the skies."[d]

8—10. (8) **bindeth . . sling**, marg. *putteth a jewel on a heap of stones.* The point of the comparison lies in the value of the stone.[a] Others think the point of comparison is the uselessness of a stone if *bound* in a sling. (9) **a thorn**, *etc.*, a fool handling the doctrines of wisdom is like a drunken man handling thorns. (10) **great God**, this is incorrect: no reference to God is made. Render thus: "As the archer that woundeth every one, so is he that hireth," etc. Trusting matters of grave moment to men of bad repute, or to any chance comer, will do as much mischief as one who shoots arrows about at random. **transgressors**, or vagrants.

The infidel confounded.—Some years ago, the Rev. James Armstrong preached at Harmony, near the Wabash, when a doctor of that place, a professed deist, or infidel, called on his associates to accompany him while he attacked the Methodists, as he said. At first he asked Mr. Armstrong, "if he followed preaching to save souls?" He answered in the affirmative. He then asked Mr. Armstrong "if he ever saw a soul?" "No." "If he ever heard a soul?" "No." "If he ever tasted a soul?" "No." "If he ever smelled a soul?" "No." "If he ever felt a soul?" "Yes, thank God," said Mr. Armstrong. "Well," said the doctor, "there are four of the five senses against one that there is not a soul." Mr. Armstrong then asked the gentleman if he was a doctor of medicine; and he also answered in the affirmative. He then asked the doctor, "If he ever saw a pain?" "No." "If he ever heard a pain?" "No." "If he ever tasted a pain?" "No." "If he ever smelled a pain?" "No." "If he ever felt a pain?" "Yes." Mr. Armstrong then said, "There are also four senses against one to evidence that there is no pain; yet, sir, you know that there is pain, and I know there is a soul." The doctor appeared confounded, and walked off.

11, 12. (11) **as a dog**, 2 Pe. ii. 22. "The emblem used here is disgusting, but the thing signified is infinitely more so."[a] **returneth**, Heb. *iterateth:* "so comes the fool for the second time again with his folly." "Here is meant a falling again into foolish courses of action after brief endeavours or beginnings at improvement."[b] (12) **wise . . conceit**, has a blind over-estimate of himself. One who is encased in self-sufficiency.[c] "The self-conceited are taught with more difficulty than the stupid."[d]

The danger of conceit (*v.* 12).—Consider the text—I. As a general truth. Here we may distinctly note—1. The character described: 2. His hopeless condition. II. With more especial reference to religion. 1. A man that carries his conceit into his religion is indeed in a most deplorable state: 2. The fool then, is in a more hopeful state than he. On this subject found a general exhortation.[e]

a "As a bag of jewels on a heap of stones."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Being scarce made up, I mean, to man, he had not apprehension of roaring terrors; for the effect of judgment is oft the cause of fear."—*Shakespeare.*

"Those who admire and love knowledge for its own sake, ought to wish to see its elements made accessible to all, were it only that they may be the more thoroughly examined into, and more effectually developed in their consequences, and receive that ductility and plastic quality which the pressure of minds of all descriptions, constantly moulding them to their purpose, can only bestow."—*Sir J. Herschel.*

a "The wicked man often sickens at his wickedness, and then returns to it again. Thus Pharaoh returned from his momentary conviction; Ahab from his pretended repentance; Herod from his partial amendment."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"Let every man that would avoid a return to his former iniquity be infinitely care-

The power of habit.—There is a fabulous story of a princess who was shut up in a strong castle, out of which she must make her escape or else be starved to death. Well, the door has been taken away; what is there to hinder her? The bright sun is shining on the forest in which the castle stands, and she joyfully hastens down to the gate, that she may pass it and be free. But stop! in this gate a spider's web is hanging from top to bottom. She sweeps it away in a moment, and is going on, when, behold, another spider's web is before her. It is very easy to sweep that away too, and she does it. But there is a third, and, when that is removed, a fourth: and so on, again and again; and at last the poor princess sits down and weeps bitterly, and feels that though there is only a spider's web between her and liberty, she shall never be free. Habits are like these spider's webs. Each single act of a habit,—what is easier to be overcome! But it is the constant succession of them, one after the other, which, except by God's special assistance, will, in the long run, overcome us.*f*

13—16. (13) **slothful,** Pr. xii. 24, xxii. 13. **lion,** here a roaring animal. (14) **as door,** *etc.*, always moving, yet never moving from its place.*a* He does not care to get out of his bed, but seems to be hung upon it, as a door upon its hinges.*b* (15) **hideth his hand,**' *comp.* ch. xix. 24. **grieveth him,** wearies him, puts him to too much trouble. (16) **sluggard,** another term for the lazy and self-indulgent. **seven men,** *i.e.* any number of men. "Indolence feeds intellectual vanity." **render a reason,** or give back an intelligent, wise answer.

The arguments of sloth (*v.* 16).—I. Picture the sluggard surrounded by friends anxious to show him a more excellent way; they argue the advantages to the individual and to society of toil. II. Picture the imperturbability of the sluggard; he is almost too lazy even to reply. III. Describe the great weakness of his character—conceit, and see *v.* 12.

Need of industry in religion.—"Make one honest effort for your soul's salvation," said a professor of Brown University to young Malcom, then a student in the institution. The student went to his room, and shut himself up with God. The expression, "Make one honest effort," sounded in his ears. He obeyed. He struggled. He cast himself on Christ. He came from that room an altered man. In after years, the preaching of our dear friend Malcom has been blessed with revival influences that have brought scores to the cross, among them, two now in the Presbyterian ministry. "I never can forget that word which was once whispered to me in an inquiry-meeting," said a Christian to his friend. "What word?" "It was the word 'eternity.'" A young pious companion, who was yearning for the salvation of my soul, came up to my pew, and simply whispered "Eternity" in my ear with solemn tenderness, and left me. But that word did not leave me; it drove me to the cross for salvation."*d*

17. **passeth by,** on his own business. **meddleth with,** allows himself to be enraged with, and so takes part in strife which does not really concern him. **taketh . . ears,** and so exciteth the dog to bite him.*a*

The meddler (*v.* 17).—I. Describe the meddlesome man. He

ful to avoid every new sin, for it is like a blow to a broken leg, or a burden to a crushed arm. Every little thing disorders the new health, and unfinished recovery."—*Jer. Taylor.*

b O. Zöckler.

c "Every man has just as much vanity as he wants understanding."—*Pope.*

d Feausset.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

f Old Jonathan.

a "Turns lazy and stupid like the dyer's nag round in its circle."—*Schiller.*

b Mat. Henry.

c "Or rather 'in the dish.' The moral is that a fool loves to have his hand (the organ of work) in the dish, the place of sensual pleasure; but he will not use his hand for any active exertion."—*Wordsworth.*

d Cuyler.

Herodotus alludes incredulously to a race of Scythians or Tartars who were reported to sleep six months continuously in a year.

"God gives sleep to the bad, in order that the good may be undisturbed."—*Sadi.*

a "He that has got a dog by the ears, if he lets him go he flies at him, and if he keeps his hold he has his hands

full, and can do nothing else."—*Mat. Henry.*

"A slight answer to an intricate and useless question is a fit cover to such a dish; a cabbage-leaf is good enough to cover a dish of mushrooms."—*J. Taylor.*

"A jest in scorn points out, and hits the thing more home than the morosest satire's sting."—*Butler.*

has a conceited notion of his own practical wisdom; can rectify everything, from the stirring of a fire to the ruling of a nation; interferes with the domestic, social, mental differences of everybody. II. Draw attention to his fate. Like one who takes a dog by the ears, he is sure to be bitten by the strife he meddles with. Application:—Draw a distinction between a mere mischievous meddler and a kind-hearted, judicious peacemaker.

The meddling 'bus passenger.—Sometimes his (Isaac Hopper's) jests conveyed cutting sarcasms. One day, when he was riding in an omnibus, he opened a portmonnaie lined with red. A man with a very flaming visage, who was somewhat intoxicated and therefore very much inclined to be talkative, said, "Ah, that is a very gay pocket-book for a Quaker to carry!" "Yes, it is very red," replied Friend Hopper; "but it is not so red as thy nose." The passengers all smiled, and the man seized the first opportunity to escape. A poor woman once entered an omnibus which was nearly full, and stood waiting for some one to make room. A proud-looking lady sat near Friend Hopper, and he asked her to move a little to accommodate the new comer. But she looked very glum, and remained motionless. After examining her countenance for an instant he said, "If thy face often looks so I shouldn't like to have thee for a neighbour." The passengers exchanged smiles at this rebuke, and the lady frowned still more deeply.[b]

b Life of Hopper.

18, 19. (18) **madman**, one who has no self-control, is insane. **firebrands**, either sparks, or arrows tipped with a burning substance. (19) **deceiveth**, deals craftily with; tells lies to. **in sport**, forgetting that to deal with deceit is to deal with an edge tool.[a] "Many a practical jester does the maniac's mischief without the maniac's excuse."

The mischievous joker (*v.* 19).—I. We have here a sketch in outline of a too common character—the practical joker; the man who finds a pleasure in hoaxing his neighbours, writing anonymous letters, etc. II. We have also his poor excuse upon detection, "Am I not in sport? I did it only for a joke." Take the Berners-street hoax, by Horne Tooke, as an illustration of the immense cost and inconvenience to those operated upon. Should there not be a greater object in life than this?

A practical joke with a purpose.—A wealthy farmer, much affected with hypochondria, came to Langenau to consult Michael Scuppach, better known by the appellation of the Mountain Doctor. "I have seven devils in my belly," said he, "no fewer than seven." "There are more than seven," replied the doctor, with the utmost gravity; "if you count them right you will find eight." After questioning the patient concerning his case, he promised to cure him in eight days, during which time he would every morning rid him of one of his troublesome inmates, at the rate of a louis d'or for each. "But," added he, "as the last will be more obstinate and difficult to expel than the others, I shall expect two louis d'ors for him." The farmer agreed to these terms: the bargain was struck, and the doctor impressing upon all present the necessity of secrecy, promised to give the nine louis d'ors to the poor of the parish. The next morning the imaginary demoniac was brought to him, and placed near a kind of machine which he had never seen before, by which means he received an electric shock. The farmer

a "The teacher cuts off the pleamen are so ready to make for themselves when they have hurt their neighbour by their lies, that they 'did not mean mischief,' that they were 'only in fun.'"—*Spk. Com.*

"Quipping and flouting is counted the flower and grace of men's speech, and especially of table talk; but the hurt that cometh by this flower is as bitter as wormwood, and the disgrace which this grace casteth upon men is fouler than any dirt of the street."—*Muffet.*

Eph. v. 4.

"He who never relaxes into sportiveness is a wearisome companion; but beware of him who jests at everything! such men disparage, by some ludicrous association, all

roared out lustily. "There goes one!" said the doctor, with the utmost gravity. Next day the same operation was repeated; the farmer bellowed as before, and the doctor coolly remarked, "Another is off!" In this manner he proceeded to the seventh. When he was preparing to attack the last, Scuppach reminded his patient that he now had need of all his courage, for this was the captain of the gang, who would make a more obstinate resistance than any of the others. The shock was at this time so strong as to extend the demoniac on the floor. "Now they are all gone!" said the doctor, and ordered the farmer to be put to bed. On recovering himself, the latter declared he was completely cured: he paid the nine louis d'ors, with abundance of thanks, and returned in the best spirits to the village. Credible witnesses attest this extraordinary cure, which proves the acuteness of the doctor, as well as the truth of Solomon's proverb, that with the fool we must sometimes talk like a fool.[b]

20—22. (20) **wood is**, for replenishing the fire. **talebearer**, or whisperer, slanderer, who is to strife as wood to fire. (21) **contentious**, querulous, or quarrelsome. Such are incendiaries. (22) **wounds**, ch. xviii. 8; such words are like stings that reach the very vitals.[a]

Fuel for social fires (*vv.* 20—22).—I. The fire, how it is produced; rumours, they say; first tales exaggerated; the three black crows; mountains and molehills. Of rumour Tennyson says:—

"The parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
That a lie which is part a truth is ever the blackest of lies;
That a lie which is all a lie, may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

II. The fire, how it is sustained: by the bearing of tales with sundry accretions, up and down; the tell-tale grows like a rolling ball of snow. III. The fire, how it may be extinguished; by insisting on the silence of the talebearer. Tell the talebearer that you shall repeat what he has said, and name him as your authority: let it be understood that what is told you as a great secret shall be no secret with you, and he must take the consequences of the repetition.

Coal, or charcoal, and wood.—Coals added to a heap of burning coals make the fire hotter. The contentious man's tongue is "set on fire of hell," and he sets on fire the whole community in which he dwells. That which is rendered "coal" in the Bible should be read charcoal, or burned wood. "The ancients, if they knew the combustible properties of mineral coal, never appear to have thought of using it for fuel; nor do the Orientals use it to this day." Indications of the existence of coal in the Holy Land have, however, been discovered in various parts of the mountains of Lebanon, and a mine is now worked by the pacha.

23—25. (23) **burning lips**, wh. seem to glow with affection. **potsherd . . dross**, "a piece of broken earthenware from the furnace, which glitters with the silver drops that stick to it, but is itself contemptible, worthless."[a] (24) **dissembleth**, maketh the show of love. (25) **speaketh fair**, then judge not by the

objects which are presented to their thoughts, and thereby render themselves incapable of any emotion which can either elevate or soften them; they bring upon their moral being an influence more withering than the blasts of the desert."—*Southey.*

b *Percy Anec.*

a "They destroy the mental peace of him *to* whom they are uttered, the reputation of him *of* whom they are uttered, and the social happiness of *both*."—*David Thomas, D.D.*

Ps. lii. 1—5; Ja. iii. 6.

v. 20. *J. Fawcett*, i. 359.

"Scandal generally takes its rise either from an ill-will to mankind, a private inclination to make ourselves esteemed, an ostentation of wit, and vanity of being thought in the secrets of the world; or from a desire of gratifying any of these dispositions of mind in those persons with whom we converse."—*Addison.*

"Slander lives upon succession; for ever housed when once it gets possession."—*Shakespeare.*

a *Spk. Com.* *v.* 23. *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 103.

vv. 24, 25. *Bp. Van Milder, Boyle Lec.* 265.

The parasites of Darius deified him for a month, to make him the tool and victim of their malicious plot. Ziba's smooth words drew David into deep disgrace; and by listening to lying prophets Ahab became infatuated by flattery, and was soon involved in ruin. "'Tis too much proved that with devotion's visage, and pious action, we do sugar o'er the devil himself."—*E. L. Magoon.*

speech, but by the *character*. seven, used as the symbol of completeness: meaning, any quantity of abominations.

Flattery.—Smooth talk proves often sweet poison. Flattery is the very spring and mother of all impiety; it blows the trumpet and draws poor souls into rebellion against God, as Sheba drew Israel against David; it put our first parents upon tasting the forbidden fruit; it put Absalom upon dethroning his father; it put Haman upon plotting the ruin of the Jews; it put Korah, Dathan, and Abiram upon rebelling against Moses; it makes men call evil good, and good evil, darkness light, and light darkness. It puts men upon abusing God, slighting Christ, and vexing the Spirit; it unmans a man, it makes him call black white, and white black; it makes a man change pearls for pebbles, and gold for counters: it makes a man judge himself wise, when foolish; knowing, when he is ignorant; holy, when he is profane: free, when he is a prisoner; rich, when he is poor; high, when he is low; full, when he is empty; happy, when he is miserable.

26—28. (26) hatred . . deceit, the enemy often using fawning words. shall be shewed, or discovered, and disclosed. (27) fall therein, ch. xii. 13; Ps. vii. 16, ix. 17. rolleth a stone, up a height. (28) hateth, its victims.[a]

Flattery (*v.* 28).—Show how a flattering mouth worketh ruin. I. By causing the flattered to be puffed up beyond measure, till he forms too good an opinion of himself. II. By causing others to form too exalted an opinion of him, so that he is placed in positions for which he is not qualified. Apply:—1. Do not flatter; 2. Do not listen to the flatterer; his opinion of the man he flatters must be mean, or he would not use flattering language; 3. A word about the fulsome flatteries of the platform, etc.

A woman at Montreal.—An elderly female, of the Roman Catholic persuasion, residing near Montreal, in Canada, having obtained a Bible, was visited by her priest, who earnestly endeavoured to prevail on her to give it up. Finding he could not persuade her to relinquish her treasure, he attempted to induce her to sell it; offering first five, then ten, fifteen, and at last twenty dollars. The good woman, after refusing these offers, at length consented to sell it for twenty-five dollars. The priest agreed, the money was paid, the obnoxious volume was given up, and he departed in triumph. But the old woman set off immediately to Montreal, and with the priest's twenty-five dollars purchased twenty-five new Bibles, for herself and her neighbours. How vain the attempt to stay the progress of Divine truth, and how fully in this case was the proverb of the wise man fulfilled, "He that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him" Prov. xxvi. 27.[b]

"Envy is a passion actually diabolical in its nature, for it makes war against God Himself; and being incapable in its impotence of clouding His Sovereign Majesty, it attacks Him in the gifts His beneficence has bestowed on man."—*Book of the Fathers.*

b R. T. S.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1. of to-morrow, *i.e.* of the plans for to-morrow. Remember that they are unexecuted, and many things may happen that will prevent your carrying them through.[a] day . . forth, life is full of surprises; the unexpected is constantly occurring, so the

a "He that injures another hates him in proportion to the injury."—*Tacitus.*

v. 28. *H. Hurst, Morn. Ex.* iii. 185; *J. Barker*, 190; *F. Webb*, ii. 145.

a Pr. xvi. 9, xix. 21; Lu. xii. 20; Ja. iv. 13—16.

best plannings may be spoiled. It has been paradoxically said that "nothing happens but the unlikely."

Making too sure of life (*v.* 1).—Boast not—1. As to thy life; 2. As to thy wealth; 3. As to thy mental acquirements; 4. As to thy religion.—*G. Brooks.*—*Now, or to-morrow* (*v.* 1).- To-morrow will come, but will you be there to meet it? The now, which Divine mercy presents to men, instead of their own false to-morrow, represents in one view a line running through all time, and in another, a point touching only the present moment. I. Let Paul's now represent time, and Solomon's to-morrow represent eternity; in this aspect to-day, and not to-morrow, is the day of salvation for mankind. II. Let now represent this moment, and to-morrow the next.[b]

To-day.—Enjoy the blessings of this day if God sends them, and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly; for this day is only ours, we are dead to yesterday, and we are not born to the morrow. He, therefore, that enjoys the present, if it be good, enjoys as much as is possible; and if only that day's trouble leans upon him, it is singular and finite. "Sufficient to the day," said Christ, "is the evil thereof." Sufficient, but not intolerable. But if we look abroad, and bring into one day's thoughts the evil of many, certain and uncertain, what will be and what will never be, our load will be as intolerable as it is unreasonable. To reprove this instrument of discontent the ancients feigned that in hell stood a man twisting a rope of hay, and still he twisted on, suffering au ass to eat up all that was finished: so miserable is he who thrusts his passion forward towards future events, and suffers all that he may enjoy to be lost and devoured by folly and inconsideration, thinking nothing fit to be enjoyed but that which is not, or cannot be had.[c]

2, another man, one who can be quite independent; who can have no interested motives in his praise. not . . mouth, "self-praise is no recommendation."[a] "Every one will be forward to run him down that cries himself up. There may be a just occasion for us to vindicate ourselves, but it does not become us to applaud ourselves."

The egotist (*v.* 2).—I. What he should not do—praise himself. Self-praise no recommendation. Men taken at their own valuation, and that of others. Self-praise an offence to the better judgment of others. Men do not see themselves as others see them. II. What he should do—let others praise him: then he would seek to be worthy of the highest praise; then he would cultivate modesty, and be worthy of praise. Apply:—1. Neither praise yourself, nor live for the praise of others, but seek the "well done" of Him who knoweth us altogether; 2. The praise of God is founded on that moral character which He has Himself created.

Flatterers.—Take care thou be not made a fool by flatterers, for even the wisest men are abused by these. Know, therefore, that flatterers are the worst kind of traitors: for they will strengthen thy imperfections, encourage thee in all evils, correct thee in nothing, but so shadow and paint all thy vices and follies, as thou shalt never, by their will, discern evil from good, or vice from virtue: and because all men are apt to flatter themselves, to entertain the additions of other men's praises, is most perilous. Do not therefore praise thyself, except thou wilt be counted

"Do not throw out with proud assurance high soaring schemes for the future."—*Elster.*

"This does not forbid preparing for to-morrow, but presuming upon to-morrow."—*Matthew Henry.*

"No one has had the gods so favourable that he can promise himself a morrow."—*Seneca.*

v. 1. *H. Binning*, ii. 421; *Dr. R. Moss*, vii. 317; *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 237; *H. Stebbing*, ii. 335; *J. Fawcett*, ii. 276; *Dr. Blair*, iv. 379; *Dr. R. Parkinson*, i. 258.

b Dr. W. Arnot.

c Jer. Taylor.

a "Not as mother says, but as the neighbours say."—*Arabic Prov.*

"Praise is sweet music, but is never tunable in thine own mouth; it is a comely garment, but its beauty, to be seen, must be put on by another, not by thyself."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"Whoso praiseth himself will soon find some one to laugh at him."—*Syrus.*

"If a man have worthy qualities, and do great deeds, let them speak for him. Prating about them, obtruding them upon men, will mar their

credit; inducing men to think them done not out of love to virtue, but for a vainglorious design."—*Barrow.*

"Flattery is a sort of bad money, to which our vanity gives currency."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

b Sir W. Raleigh.

a vainglorious fool, neither take delight in the praise of other men, except thou deserve it, and receive it from such as are worthy and honest, and will withal warn thee of thy faults; for flatterers have never any virtue, they are ever base, creeping, cowardly persons. A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling; it is said by Isaiah in this manner: "My people, they that praise thee, seduce thee, and disorder the paths of thy feet:" and David desired God to cut out the tongue of a flatterer. But it is hard to know them from friends, they are so obsequious and full of protestations; for as a wolf resembles a dog, so doth a flatterer a friend. A flatterer is compared to an ape, who because she cannot defend the house like a dog, labour as an ox, or bear burdens as a horse, doth therefore yet play tricks, and provoke laughter.[b]

a Ungoverned passion. The fool being usually conceived as one having no power of self-control.

"Say nothing to any one in a fury, for that is like putting to sea in a storm. Wise men, remembering their own infirmities, bear with those of others."—*Quoted by Nicholls.*

b "Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of revenge and murder, the beginner of sedition, and the perpetual tormentor of virtue."—*Socrates.*

"Nature in every man is both envious and disdainful, and never loves to honour another, but when it may be an honour to itself."—*Bp. Hall.*

Ja. iii. 14, 16.

c *G. Brooks.*

v. 4. *Dr. R. Moss,* iv. 165.

d *Cheever.*

3, 4. (3) stone, *etc.*, lit. "Heaviness is in stone, and weight is in sand." fool's wrath, or ill-temper.[a] heavier, on himself, as well as on those whom he makes to suffer under it. (4) wrath, violent passion. outrageous, or overflowing: makes a man "savage and furious as a beast of prey." envy,[b] or jealousy. The violent passion in a husband who thinks himself wronged.

The power of envy (*v.* 4).—I. Its nature. 1. Its object is something that is good, natural or acquired—even religious excellence; 2. Its object is something that is in possession of another—grudges the possession of it by him—desires to appropriate it; 3. Something that is not absolutely unattainable—a man does not envy the beauty of a woman, or the woman the strength of a man. II. Its properties. 1. It is common: many things due to envy which are generally ascribed to other causes; 2. It is odious: it is pain arising from the happiness of others, and a desire to destroy that happiness—breathes a murderous spirit; 3. It is destructive—subtle, acceptable to many observers, more intense in proportion to the excellence of the person it assails. III. Its cure. 1. A Scriptural estimate of the objects which excite envy—they are not so valuable as they appear to be; 2. A just opinion of ourselves—we do not deserve so much as we imagine; 3. An entire change of heart—conversion. Apply:—(1) Do not needlessly provoke envy; (2) Do not wickedly indulge it; (3) Do not basely fear it; (4) Do not angrily resent it.[c]

Xerxes angry with the Hellespont.—When the force of the current had carried away the temporary bridge which Xerxes had caused to be thrown over the Hellespont, on his grand expedition into Greece, he was so enraged, that he not only ordered the heads of the workmen to be struck off, but, like a madman, inflicted lashes upon the sea, to punish it for its insolence; he, moreover, affected to hold it in future under his control, by throwing fetters into it! "A striking proof," adds the historian, "how much the possession of despotic power tends not only to corrupt the heart, but even to weaken and blind the understanding."[d]

5, 6. (5) open rebuke, plain, straightforward censure. secret love,[a] *i.e.* love which shrinks from reproving, and is willing to let a friend's faults continue rather than speak about them. (6) wounds, given to our feelings by pointing out our

a "Love which from false consideration dissembles, and does not name to one's

faults.[b] **kisses**, *etc.*,[c] *i.e.* of a friend who is really an enemy to us because he smoothes over our failings. **deceitful**, Heb. *frequent ;* so to be lightly esteemed.[d]

The wounds of a friend (*v.* 6).—I. They are of the most painful. II. They are accompanied with sympathy. III. They are followed by healing words. IV. They manifest to us our weak part of character. V. God is our chief friend ;—notice how He wounds the heart by bringing sin to remembrance, but only to heal and save.

Friendship.—How few have the requisite boldness or wisdom duly to administer reproofs ! It is said of Alexander that he bade a philosopher begone from his presence, who had been a long time with him ; for, said he. So long hast thou been with me without ever reproving me, which must needs be thy fault : for either thou sawest nothing in me worthy of reproof, which argues thy ignorance, or else thou durst not reprove me, which argues thy unfaithfulness. Charity and prudence are not parasitical plants which require holes of falsehood to climb up upon. It is often extremely difficult in the mixed things of this world to act truly and kindly too ; but therein lies one of the great trials of a man, that his sincerity should have kindness in it, and his kindness truth.

7, 8. (7) **loatheth**, *Heb.* "treadeth under foot." The teaching is that indulgence in any sensual pleasure is sure to bring on satiety, while self-restraint increases our capacity for enjoyment. **hungry**, *etc.*, comp. the Eng. proverb, "Hunger is the best sauce :" and the Ger. prov., "Hunger is the best cook." (8) **bird . . nest**, a prov. against the restless love of change and travel.[a]

The wandering bird (*v.* 8).—I. Consider the nest of the bird and the place of the man. 1. The same wise Creator that supplied the bird with its nest, has furnished a place for man ; 2. As the nest for the bird, so the place for the man which God has chosen is the best. II. Consider the wandering bird and man. 1. Some of the causes of wandering :—as pride, etc.,—the prodigal son ; 2. Some consequences of wandering : danger, discomfort, a humiliating return, or irretrievable ruin. Apply :—(1) Let those who are in their place, keep there ; (2) If out of our place, let us at once return ; (3) The best place for wanderers is the heart of Christ.

Honey.—Both St. Basil and St. Chrysostom put this difference between the labour of the ant and the bee, that the ants work but for themselves, the bee for others. Though the ants have a commonwealth of their own, yet those fathers call their labour but private labour, because no other commonwealth have benefit by their labour but their own. Direct thy labours in thy calling to the good of the public, and then thou art a civil, a moral ant : but consider also that all that are of the household of the faithful, and profess the same truth of religion, are part of this public, and direct thy labours for the glory of Christ Jesus amongst them too, and then thou art a religious and a Christian bee, and the fruit of thy labour shall be honey. The labour of the ant is *sub dio*, open, evident, manifest : the labour of the bee is *sub tecto*, in a house, in a hive ; they will do good, and yet they will not be seen to do it ; they affect not glory, nay, they avoid it. For in experience, when some men, curious of natural know-

neighbour his faults even where it should do so." —*O. Zöckler.*

"I thank that man as my friend through whose advice I am enabled to wipe off the blemishes of my soul before the appearance of the awful Judge.'" —*Gregory I.*

[b] "There cannot be a more worthy improvement of friendship than in a fervent opposition to the sins of those we love." —*Bp. Hall.*

[c] Matt. xxvi. 48, 49.

[d] "Authority predominates in favour of *abundant*, and we thus get a delicate touch of irony, wh. is wanting in the A.V."—*Spk. Com.*

[a] "A prov. directed against weariness of one's home, against adventurous impulses, and a restless roving, without quiet domestic tastes."—*O. Zöckler.*

"He whose levity or discontent makes him rashly leave his country, or trade, or office, too often undoes himself, but rarely mends his condition."—*Bp. Patrick.*

1 Co. vii. 24 ; 1 Th. iv. 11.

v. 8. *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 163.

"Contentment produces, in some measure, all those effects which the alchemist usually ascribes to what he calls the philosopher's stone ; and if it does not bring riches, it does the same thing, by banishing the desire of them. If it cannot remove the disquietudes aris-

ing from a man's mind, body, or fortune, it makes him easy under them."—*Addison.*

"May I always have a heart superior, with economy suitable, to my fortune."—*Shenstone.*

b Dr. Donne.

a "Every friend is to the other a sun, and a sunflower also; he attracts and follows."—*Richter.*

b "Friendship, like certain wines, becomes valuable with years. The old family friend, with whom are associated the touching memories of many loved ones in the dust, his presence is more than sunshine to the soul, his voice richer than any music."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

"A brother, if he be worthy, is the readiest and nearest to be a friend; but till he be so, he is but the twilight of the day, and but the blossom to the fairest fruit of Paradise. A brother does not always make a friend, but a friend ever makes a brother, and more."—*J. Taylor.* v. 10. *W. Enfield,* i. 261; *R. Robinson.* iv. 39; *Dr. Blair,* iv. 358; *Dr. W. Stevens,* iii. 1.

c R. T. S.

a "The uprightness of the scholar will be the truest answer to all the attacks on the character or teaching of the master."—*Spk. Com.*

ledge, have made their hives of glass, that by that transparency they might see the bees' manner of working, the bees have made it their first work to line that glass hive with a crust of wax, that they might work and not be discerned. It is a blessed sincerity to work as the ant, professedly, openly; but because there may be cases when to do so would destroy the whole work, though there be a cloud and a curtain between thee and the eyes of men, yet if thou do them clearly in the sight of God, that He see His glory advanced by thee, the fruit of thy labour shall be honey.[b]

9, 10. (9) **ointment**, *etc.*, things highly esteemed, pleasing, and refreshing. **the heart**, the organ of perceiving what pleases the senses. **hearty counsel**, sincere, faithful, and loving.[a] (10) **thy friend**, one long tried and proved.[b] In the time of trouble such a one will prove better to you than relatives. **neighbour . . near**, in heart and sympathy.

Old family friends (*v.* 10).—I. Consider some of our fathers' old friends. 1. The Sabbath; 2. The sanctuary; 3. The Saviour; 4. The Scriptures. II. Consider some reasons for being true to them. 1. Because of what they have done for those who are dear to us; 2. Because of what they promise to do for us; 3. Because of what they have already done for some of us.

"He that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
A silent court of justice in his breast—
Himself the judge and jury; and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemned:
And that drags down his life: then comes, what comes,
hereafter."

A Christian friend.—A number of intimate friends being at dinner together, on the Lord's day, one of the company, in order to prevent improper discourse, said, "It is a question whether we shall all go to heaven or not." This plain hint occasioned a general seriousness and self-examination. One thought, "If any of this company go to hell, it must be myself;" and so thought another, and another; even the servants who waited at table were affected in the same manner. In short, it was afterwards found that this one sentence proved, by the special blessing of God upon it, instrumental to their conversion. What an encouragement is this to Christians, to give a serious turn to the conversation, when in company! It should be observed, however, that the Lord's day was not instituted for the visiting and entertainment even of Christians. How is their conduct, who make a point of meeting and feasting on the Sabbath, to be distinguished from the Sunday parties of the profane? Our place of meeting, on that day, is the house of God; and our feast, the rich provisions of the everlasting Gospel.[c]

11, 12. (11) **wise**, a word including here all virtue and goodness. The goodness of the children, when grown up, takes all reproach away from their parents.[a] **reproacheth me**, as having failed in parental duty. (12) **prudent**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xxii. 3.

A father's wish (*v.* 11).—I. The nature of the father's desire. That his son may be wise. This from a good father includes wisdom of the highest kind—religion. II. The reason of the

father's desire. That he may boldly speak his son's praise to inquirers, that when any reproach him with too much indulgence, he may point to his son as an answer.—*Effects of prudence and folly contrasted.*—Solomon a keen observer of men. One post of observation Prov. vii. 6. Imagine cases of merchants, pleasure-seekers, travellers, in illustration of the text, as seen by the king. I. Contrast the characters. 1. The prudent—on the outlook, circumspect, he forecasts the future, he distrusts himself; 2. The simple—the shallow, flippant, conceited, unobservant, "passes on" self-satisfied, takes things easy with a jaunty air. II. Contrast the courses pursued. 1. The prudent hides himself at the right time, in the right place, in the right way: 2. The simple—he passes on, life with him a constant passing on, passing by the call to repentance—the cross nothing to him—"O ye that pass by," etc. III. Contrast the two conclusions of life. 1. Safety for the prudent; 2. Punishment for the wicked.[b]

Duke of Burgundy.—Louis, Duke of Burgundy, was a pattern of filial obedience. It was never necessary to threaten or punish him in order to make him do his duty. A word, or even a look, was sufficient. He was always much grieved when his mother seemed displeased with him, or spoke to him less kindly than usual. On such occasions he would often weep, and say to her, clasping his little hands, "Dear mamma, do not be angry with me; I will do what you please."[c]

13, 14. (13) take .. stranger, *comp.* ch. xx. 16. (14) loud voice, the sign of intensity and extravagance.[a] The person referred to is the flatterer or sycophant.[b] rising early, the sign of zeal and eagerness. counted a curse, bec. men are sure to suspect that he has some sinister motive.

Friendship, love, and truth.—

When friendship, love, and truth abound
Among a band of brothers,
The cup of joy goes gaily round,
Each shares the bliss of others.
Sweet roses grace the thorny way
Along this vale of sorrow;
The flowers that shed their leaves to-day
Shall bloom again to-morrow.
How grand in age, how fair in youth,
Are holy friendship, love, and truth!

On halcyon wings our moments pass,
Life's cruel cares beguiling;
Old Time lays down his scythe and glass,
In gay good-humour smiling;
With ermine beard and forelock grey,
His reverent front adorning,
He looks like Winter turn'd to May,
Night softened into morning.
How grand in age, how fair in youth
Are holy friendship, love, and truth!

From these delightful fountains flow
Ambrosial rills of pleasure:
Can man desire, can Heaven bestow,
A more resplendent treasure?

"Neutrality in things good or evil is both odious and prejudicial; but in matters of an indifferent nature is safe and commendable.. Herein taking of parts maketh sides, and breaketh unity. In an unjust cause of separation, he that favoureth both parts may, perhaps, have least love of either side, but hath most charity in himself."—*Bishop Hall.*

b Hive.

c R. T. S.

a "Clamorous and hasty professions of affection are to be distrusted. They may have the sound of benedictions in the morning, but often they are soon turned into cursing."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Of all wild beasts, preserve me from a flatterer."—*Johnson.*

"Friendship is constant in all other things, save in the office and affairs of love; therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues. Let every eye negotiate for itself, and trust no agent; for beauty is a witch, against whose charms faith melteth into blood."—*Shakespeare.*

"Good-nature is a disposition to please, and is compounded of kindness, for-

bearance, forgiveness, and self-denial." — *C. Buck.*

c J. Montgomery.

Adorn'd with gems so richly bright,
We'll form a constellation,
Where every star with modest light,
Shall gild his proper station.
How grand in age, how fair in youth,
Are holy friendship, love, and truth![c]

15, 16. (15) **dropping**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xix. 13. **rainy day**, or more pointedly, a day of showers. (16) **hideth her**, *i.e.* the quarrelsome wife. Hideth, in the sense of restrains, endeavours to keep her temper within limits. **ointment**, *etc.*, *i.e.* however he presses the unguent in his hand, the fragrance of it will come abroad.[a]

Perfuming the hands.—This refers to the custom of perfuming, so common in ancient times, and not infrequent now. The odour of their cosmetics is so powerful, that the very street along which the person walks is highly scented. Such ointment cannot be concealed: it proclaims itself, as the Hebrew may be rendered, wherever it comes. The right hand is mentioned because it is most honourable, most used in anointing, and cannot be kept concealed in the bosom, as all salutations, and the endless gestures in conversation call it forth. The ointment of the right hand will surely bewray itself, and so will a contentious woman: she cannot be hid.

"A man moulds society by his own behaviour. A parent will find himself reflected in his children; an instructor will find himself reflected in his scholars," etc.[b] Or, "We may see our

"However he may attempt to conceal the domestic troubles which arise from the contentions of his wife, yet they proclaim themselves, as the ointment of his right hand betrays itself by its scent."—*Wordsworth.*

"Those that are froward and brawling will proclaim their own shame, even when their friends, in kindness to them, would cover it."—*Mat. Henry.*

a Stier, Bertheau.

17, 18. (17) **iron**, *etc.*, lit. "iron to iron maketh sharp." **sharpeneth . . friend**, some think the meaning is, "one enrages, provokes the other."[a] But prefer the idea that conversation provokes intelligence, wh. the face exhibits. One friend, in conversation, stimulates the other. **the countenance**, wh. is the revealer of the soul. (18) **keepeth**, *i.e.* patiently and perseveringly watcheth and tendeth. "Diligence secures its reward, even for the humble servant."

"Iron sharpeneth iron by removing the rust wh. has been contracted from their lying apart; so intercourse between friend and friend rubs down the prejudices which they have contracted in their separate state."—*Ed. Irving.*

Renewal of friendship (*v.* 17).—I. A friend separated from his friend grows dull; so iron becomes dull of edge when kept from sharpening process. II. As iron becomes bright and sharp by friction, so the meeting of friends tends to sharpen and polish the understanding and refresh the heart. III. There is a Friend with whom communion is better than with any earthly friend.

Dr. Haweis.—Captain Wilson, of the missionary ship *Duff*, on his return from his expedition for evangelising the heathen, was presented with a diamond ring, of considerable value, by Dr. Haweis, a zealous promoter of the London Missionary Society, accompanied with the following note:—"Anxious for your arrival, I had prepared the following token. I wish to couple my name with yours. The circle is an emblem of the eternity I hope to spend with you. The brilliant is not brighter than my affection, nor the gold purer than my friendship. Wear me on your heart: while mine beats, it will remember you, and bless God for you."[b]

"You may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flower of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend."—*Ld. Bacon.*

v. 17. *J. Marriott*, 384.

b Dr. Haweis.

19, 20. (19) **as . . face**, "As we see our own face when we look on the mirror-like surface of the water, so in every heart of man we may see our own likeness. In spite of all diversities we come upon the common human nature in wh. we all alike share."[a] Or,

a Spk. Com.

b Wordsworth.

c Fausset.

characters in the developed tempers of others."[c] (20) eyes of man, what Jno. calls the "lust of the eyes;" comp. Ec. i. 8.[d]

The hearts of men alike (*v.* 19).—I. Explain this assertion. It is taken for granted that there is a parity—1. Of age; 2. In character; 3. In condition. Taking the assertion of Solomon in this qualified sense, we proceed to—II. Confirm it. 1. This similarity will be found in all; 2. Whilst in an unenlightened state; 3. When awakened to a sense of their perishing condition; 4. When truly converted to the faith of Christ. Apply:—This subject is not one of curious speculation; but of real use, of most important use—(1) For our humiliation; (2) For our consolation; (3) For our encouragement.[e]

Man's thoughts.—There is much profound and important wisdom in that Proverb of Solomon, where it is said, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." It forms part of a truth still more comprehensive—that every man knoweth his own peculiar feelings, and difficulties, and trials, far better than he can get any of his neighbours to perceive them. It is natural to us all, that we should desire to engross to the uttermost the sympathy of others with what is most painful to the sensibilities of our own bosom, and with what is most aggravating in the hardships of our own situation. But, labour as we may, we cannot with every power of expression make an adequate conveyance of all our sensations and of all our circumstances into another understanding. There is something in the intimacy of a man's own experience which he cannot make to pass entire into the heart and mind, even of his most familiar companion; and thus it is, that he is often defeated in his attempts to obtain a full and cordial possession of his sympathy. He does not reflect all the while, that with every human being he addresses, there is an inner man, which forms a theatre of passions and of interests, as busy, as crowded, and as fitted as his own to engross the anxious and the exercised feelings of a heart which can alone understand its own bitterness, and lay a correct estimate on the burden of its own visitations. Every man we meet carries about with him, in the unperceived solitude of his bosom, a little world of his own, and we are just as blind, and as insensible, and as dull, both of perception and of sympathy, about his engrossing objects, as he is about ours; and, did we suffer this observation to have all its weight upon us, it might serve to make us more candid and more considerate of others. It might serve to abate the monopolising spirit of our nature. It might serve to soften down all the malignity which comes out of those curious contemplations that we are apt to cast on the fancied ease and prosperity which are around us. It might serve to reconcile every man to his own lot, and dispose him to bear with thankfulness his own burden: and, sure I am, if this train of sentiment were prosecuted with firmness, and calmness, and impartiality, it would lead to the conclusion that each profession in life has its own peculiar pains and its own besetting inconveniences; that, from the bottom of society up to the golden pinnacle which blazons upon its summit, there is much in the shape of care and suffering to be found; that, throughout all the conceivable varieties of human condition, there are trials which can neither be adequately told on the one side, nor fully understood on the other; that the ways of God to man are equal in this, as in every department of His administration; and that, go

d Men's cupidity is insatiable as the grave.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

"The heart must be made a temple to God, wherein sacrifices do ascend: but that they may be accepted it must be purged of idols, nothing left in any corner, though never so secret, to stir the jealousy of our God, who sees through all. Oh, happy that heart that is, as Jacob's house, purged; in which no more idols are to be found, but the holy God dwelling there alone as in His holy temple."—*Leighton.*

"Nature without learning is like a blind man; learning without nature is like the maimed; practice without both these is incomplete. As in agriculture a good soil is first sought for, then a skilful husbandman, and then good seed; in the same way nature corresponds to the soil; the teacher to the husbandman; precepts and instruction to the seed."—*Plutarch*

"Let not a man trust his victory over his nature too far; for nature will lie buried a great time, and yet revive upon the occasion or temptation,—like as it was with Æsop's damsel, turned from a cat to a woman, who sat very demurely at the board's end till a mouse ran before her."—*Lord Bacon.*

to whatever quarter of human experience we may, we shall find how He has provided enough to exercise the patience and to accomplish the purposes of a wise and a salutary discipline upon all His children.*f*

f Dr. Chalmers.

21, 22. (21) so . . praise, render, "so let a man be to his praise," *i.e.* "let him purify it from all the alloy of flattery and baseness with wh. it is too probably mixed up."*a* (22) bray . . mortar, or pound him with a pestle in a mortar :*b* a most thorough and efficient operation for wheat, and such things. It is a figure of the severest afflictions and testings : and even such are useless to the obstinate fool.*c*

a "Or render, 'But man according to his glorying,' *i.e.* one is judged according to the standard of that of wh. he makes his boast." —*O. Zöckler.*

"Or, according as a man bears praise. Thus vain men seek it; weak men are inflated by it; wise men disregard it."—*Fausset.*

b "Every family has one of these large stone mortars, and you may hear the sound of the braying at all hours as you walk in the streets of the city."—*Thomson.*

c "An obstinate man does not hold opinions, they hold him." —*Pope.*

Braying in a mortar.—An author, noticing this mode of punishment among the Turks, says, "Some of the guards of the tower, who suffered Prince Coreskie to escape from prison, were impaled, and others were pounded, or beaten to pieces, in great mortars of iron, by order of the Turkish Government."—*Pounding in a mortar as a punishment.*—Dr. Boothroyd says, on this passage, "That is, no correction, however severe, will cure him." Large mortars are used in the East for the purpose of separating the rice from the husk. When a considerable quantity has to be prepared, the mortar is placed outside the door ; and two women, each with a pestle of five feet long, begin the work. They strike in rotation, as blacksmiths do on the anvil. Cruel as it is, this is a punishment of the State ; the poor victim is thrust into the mortar, and beaten with the pestle. The late king of Kandy compelled one of the wives of his rebellious chiefs thus to beat her own infant to death. Hence the saying, "Though you beat that loose woman in a mortar, she will not leave her ways :" which means, Though you chastise her ever so much, she will never improve.

23, 24. (23) diligent . . flocks, the farmer's eye needs to be on everything every day. (24) riches . . ever, they can only be preserved by constant care, and wise tending. the crown, of riches and prosperity.

"Economy is the parent of integrity, of liberty, and of ease, and the beauteous sister of temperance, of cheerfulness, and health ; and profuseness is a cruel and crafty demon, that gradually involves her followers in dependence and debts ; that is, fetters them with 'irons that enter their souls.'"—*Hawksworth.*

Saving in order to give.—Two persons who were employed in collecting money for some public charity, knocked at the door of a certain gentleman, intending to solicit his donation. While waiting there, they overheard the master of the house severely reproving his servant for the waste of a small piece of candle. Judging from this appearance of extreme parsimony, that he was a covetous man, one of them proposed that they should lose no more time in waiting there, but go on to another house ; the other person, however, thought it best to stay. At length they were introduced, when the gentleman, having read their case, immediately presented them with five guineas. The collectors, so agreeably disappointed, could not conceal their surprise ; which being observed by the donor, he desired to know why they expressed so much wonder at the gift. "The reason, sir," said one of them, "is this : we happened to hear you severely blaming your servant for losing an inch of candle, and expected nothing from a person who, we feared, was so parsimonious." "Gentlemen," replied he, "it is true I am very exact in the economy of my affairs ; I cannot endure the waste of anything, however small its value : and I do this, that I may save out of a moderate income something to give to God and religion."*a*

"I had rather see my courtiers laugh at my avarice, than my people weep at my extravagance." — *Louis XII.*

a Whitecross.

25—27. (25) **hay**, *etc.*, the providential arrangements for the seasons is here presented as an incentive to diligence.[a] Prob. the idea is, "the hay disappeareth, and then the tender grass cometh." (26) **the lambs**, wh. give their wool. (27) **goat's milk**, more plentiful of old than milk of cows.

Attention to the flocks.—We arrived at (a) well . . . at midnight, (in) a mountainous place, where the water was good enough to drink. We were agreeably surprised to find the well, but much more so when we saw a few sheep round it. There never was a more welcome sight. . . . We proposed to purchase one, and eat it as soon as it should be half cooked. We approached, but the guardian of the flock beat a forced march into the mountain, and drove the intended repast away from us. We began to think we could not continue to be deprived of what we could purchase, and sent some of our drivers to follow the flock, which they hastily did, as they were not less hungry than ourselves. . . . We reached the flock, and found that its guardians were two beautiful damsels of the desert. . . . Those poor girls had no other way to show themselves but at the well: that is the only place they have a chance to see or be seen. At last we purchased the sheep, and devoured it; the nymphs watered their flocks, filled their skins, and set off at daylight."[b]

[a] "God's bounty is a great encouragement to our industry."—*Lawson.*

"It is no small commendation to manage a little well. He is a good waggoner that can turn in a little room. To live well in abundance is the praise of the estate, not of the person. I will study more how to give a good account of my little, than how to make it more."—*Bishop Hall.*

[b] *Belzoni.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1. **flee . . pursueth**, "like one that absconds for debt, who thinks every one he meets a bailiff."[a] "Conscience makes cowards of us all." **righteous**, right-hearted, who have a "conscience void of offence." **bold as a lion**,[b] the lion is generally regarded as the type of boldness, perhaps through the contrast bet. his open attack and the cat-like crouching of the tiger. Travellers, such as Livingstone, dispute the claim of the lion to special boldness. "A man whose conscience is with him can dare the universe."

Moral cowardice (*v.* 1).—This a fact that may be accounted for on moral grounds. Conscience is the tormentor of the bad man. I. Then the finest faculties of men may become terrible scourges. II. Then no dependence is to be placed on the wicked in the time of danger. III. Then the wicked are always making fools of themselves. IV. Then the wicked cannot bear the judgment of man; how can they endure the vengeance of God? V. Then man may come to be regarded as the enemy of man.[c]

A thoughtless young lady.—A minister once called to converse with a family on the subject of religion. A gay young lady perceiving him, withdrew through the back door to the house of a neighbour, saying, as she ran, "He shall not get me this time." The minister came in disappointed. He bethought himself, however, of a method of reaching the fugitive, and, picking up a Bible, turned down a leaf at that passage, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," and requested her mother to hand it to her when she should return. She returned in triumphant glee after the preacher had left the house, joyous in her thoughtlessness, when her mother showed her the passage. She looked at it; her countenance fell. The thought struck her that she could not flee from God, from whose searching eye,

[a] *Mat. Henry.*

Ge. iii. 9, 10.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser.

"Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind; the thief doth fear each bush an officer."—*Shakespeare.*

[b] Comp. Ps. xxvii. 1—3; Ac. iv. 13; Ro. i. 15, 16.

[c] *Dr. Parker.*

"Whose anger should he fear who knows that God is propitious to him? that supreme King, the light of whose countenance is life, and who, by one smile, disperses the darkest cloud, and calms the most turbulent tempest."—*Abp. Leighton.*

v. 1. *Dr. J. Scott*, iii. 99; *P. Lloyd*, 69; *J. Rees*, 267; *Dr. W. Jones*, 1;

not the remotest distance, nor the deepest darkness, could hide her. Deep conviction succeeded to serious reflection. She now sought the minister, and with weeping eyes made her apology to him, which was rather an humble confession than an apology. "Make your confession to God," said the pastor. "Who am I? You have given me neither offence nor injury. But you have greatly injured God and offended your Saviour, and to Him you must go."[d]

2, 3. (2) transgression, here distinctly *rebellion*, revolt against the settled government. many are the princes, there is constant change of officials and dynasty, and so the restlessness and insecurity of the nation.[a] a man, better in the plural, *men*, with reference to the wise effort of the people to preserve and to improve the existing order.[b] prolonged, or maintained. This is the true and wise conservatism. Establish order and government by wisely adjusting it, and making it every way efficient and satisfactory. (3) poor, *etc.*, it is still as true as ever that the greatest oppressors of the poor are the poor themselves. no food, bec. it washes out of the ground the *seed*-corn.

A poor man's worst oppressor (*v.* 3).—Another poor man. I. Who hastens to be rich. II. Who, being in office, tyrannises over fellow-servants. III. Who betrays his friends, or turns king's evidence. IV. Such conduct is unnatural. Who may be expected with the poor so much as others of the poor who know, by their own experience, the wants and sorrows of poverty? V. Though unnatural, it has often been noted: negro slave-drivers the most unmerciful: see also Ex. ii. 13. Ziba sought the injury of Mephibosheth—Judas betrayed Jesus.

Good example of a king.—A heathen king, who had been for years confirmed in the sin of drunkenness, by the evil practices of white men on the Sandwich Islands, had been led to forsake the dreadful habit. He said, lately, to a missionary, "Suppose you put four thousand dollars in one hand, and a glass of rum in the other, you say, You drink this rum I give you four thousand dollars, I no drink it; you say you kill me, I no drink it."[c]

4, 5. (4) praise the wicked, *i.e.* when he seems to be successful. They who disregard the law do not estimate actions by their rightness, or their motives. Special reference here seems to be to the successful but unrighteous ruler. contend with them, refusing to praise successful villany.[a] (5) understand not judgment, *i.e.* their faculty for distinguishing between good and evil is darkened. "We lose ethical discernment in proportion as we do evil."[b] Great moral principles are hidden from those who live under the influence of sin.

Effects of piety and impiety in the world (*v.* 4).—I. Of impiety. Such declare—1. That obedience to God's law is unnecessary; 2. That not even the Gospel itself entails any obligation upon us; 3. That the way of wickedness is preferable as it respects this present world; 4. That no evil is to be apprehended from it in the world to come. II. Of piety. Such a man will contend with the other—1. By the silent testimony of his life: 2. By the open avowal of his sentiments. Learn—(1) How much guilt attaches to us all; (2) What a pre-eminent measure of guilt is contracted by a backsliding professor; (3) What an incentive we have to cultivate piety in the highest degree.[e]

F. Webb, i. 103; *J. Garnons*, i. 125; *J. G. Dowling*, 472; *R. W. Dibdin*, 59.

d R. T. S.

a "Illus. forcibly in the later history of Rome; or in the troublous times of France. See also the rapid succession of sovereigns in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel.

"There are few national governments so bad that they may not better be *improved* than *removed*

Thomson cites an Arabic proverb, "May Allah multiply your sheikhs!" as embodying in its intense malediction a constant Oriental experience of fearful calamity.

e Dr. Cheever.

a "There have been men in all ages who have had the manly honesty to stand up against the hollowness and the corruptions of their age."—*D. w. Thomas, D.D. b Spk. Com.*

"Wickedness corrupts a man's reasonings, gives him false principles, and evil measuring of things."—*Bishop Taylor.*

Ps. lxxxii. 5; Je. iv. 22; 1 Co. ii. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 18; Ps. xxv. 9; Jno. vii. 17; 1 Jno. ii. 20, 27.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Read not much at a time; but meditate as much as your time, and capacity, and dis-

God's choice for us is best.—God best knows what will do us good or hurt, and therefore we should refer it to Him to dispose of us according to His own pleasure. We should not want, if God saw it better for us to abound: for He is no niggard of His blessings, but is good, and doth good. It is not meet that man should have the disposal of himself, or that God should accommodate His providence to our carnal interest. No; God's will must always precede, and ours follow. We must bring our hearts thoroughly to yield to what God appointeth. How unmeet judges are flesh and blood of what condition is fit for us! We would be fed only with delicacies of prosperity and pleasure; but it is for our profit that we should be chastened, that we should be partakers of His holiness.[d]

6, 7. (6) **better**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xix. 1. **perverse**, *etc.*, lit. "than one who is crooked in the two ways," or "in a double way."[a] **be rich**, since riches can never make up for the lack of integrity. (7) **the law**, here prob. with special ref. to wise self-restraints and moral purity, as indicated in next clause. **companion**, *etc.*, lit. "one who feeds gluttons;"[b] the profligate or waster (ch. xxiii. 21). **shameth**, ch. xxv. 8.[c]

The advantage of uprightness (*v.* 6).—It makes the poor who has it better than the rich who lacks it. I. In himself—heart, conscience, hopes. II. In the respect of other men—contemporaries, posterity. III. In the judgment of God. IV. In the great hereafter.

The honest Ostiak.—A Russian was travelling from Tobolsk to Beresow. On the road he stopped one night at the hut of an Ostiak. In the morning, on continuing his journey, he discovered that he had lost his purse, containing about one hundred roubles. The son of the Ostiak found the purse, while out a-hunting, but instead of taking it up, went and told his father; who was equally unwilling to touch it, and ordered his son to cover it with some bushes. A few months after this, the Russian returned, and stopped at the same hut, but the Ostiak did not recognise him. He related the loss he had met with. The Ostiak listened very attentively, and when he had finished, "You are welcome," said he; here is my son, who will show you the spot where it lies; no hand has touched it but the one which covered it over, that you might recover what you have lost."[d]

8, 9. (8) **usury . . gain**, or "gain by usury," the term including all overreaching and fraudulent efforts to get gain.[a] Excessive interest. **for him . . poor.** bec. in the long run God's providence will surely direct the proper use of wealth,[b] ch. xiii. 22. (9) **turneth . . ear**, wilfully resisting instruction and refusing obedience.[c] Here especially defying social and moral rules. **his prayer**, that offered as religious formality,[d] or that pressed out from him in the time of his distress.

The prayer of the lawless (*v.* 9).—I. It is remarkable that lawless men do sometimes pray; pirate of Sicily known to have been punctual in attendance on confession, etc. II. But their prayer an abomination—1. To self: irksome, disturbing to their own conscience; 2. To other men: who despise their hypocrisy; 3. To God: the prayer of the wicked an abomination.

Rare self-denial.—I once went to a friend, says Mr. Cecil, for the express purpose of calling him out into the world. I said to

position will give you leave; ever remembering that little reading and much thinking, little speaking and much hearing, frequent and short prayers and great devotion, is the best way to be wise, to be holy, to be devout."—*Taylor.*
d Dr. T. Manton.

a "One who unskilfully and waywardly passes from one way to another, one who, with divided heart, stands midway between the right path and the by-path of immorality."—*O. Zöckler.*
b The carousing, self-indulgent, extravagant spendthrift.
c Heb. *cdlam*, used only in these two passages in the Prov. Properly to *wound*, then *reproach, insult.*
"He that keeps a rakish company, and spends his time and money with them, not only grieves his parents, but shames them, it turns to their disrepute, as if they had not done their duty by him."—*Matthew Henry.*
d Dr. Cheever.

a "Orientals, ancient and modern, have a peculiarly deep and painful experience of the enormities of usury."—*O. Zöckler.*
b "The law of God's government is that ill-gotten gains do not prosper; that after a time they pass into hands that know how to use them

him, "It is your duty to accept the loan of ten thousand pounds and to push yourself forward into an ampler sphere." But he was a rare character, and his case was rare. His employers had said, "We are ashamed you should remain so long a servant in our house, with the whole weight of affairs upon you. We wish you to enter as a principal with us, and will advance you ten thousand pounds. It is the custom of the city: it is your due; we are dissatisfied to see you in your present sphere." I assured him that it appeared to me to be his duty to accede to the proposal. But I did not prevail. He said, "Sir, I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to get to heaven. I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to master the world. I have everything I wish. More would encumber, increase my difficulties, and endanger me."[e]

10. **causeth . . way,**[a] *i.e.* acteth the tempter. Draws the righteous into the enticements of sensuality and moral evil. Some bad men make special attack upon those who are pious, thinking to boast in their triumph over such. **own pit,** his attempts to destroy the righteous will lead him further and deeper into sin, with all its consequences. **in possession,** *i.e.* preserved to them through the temptation. God will defend His own who put their trust in Him. They shall "stand in the evil day."

Good things in possession (*v.* 10).—I. Who is the possessor? The righteous, that is—1. The man who tries to do right: 2. And trusts for Divine acceptance in the rightcousness of Christ. II. What are the good things in possession? 1. A conscience at peace; 2. Approval of men; 3. Favour of God; 4. A good hope through grace.

Ought and would.—At a periodical meeting of those, generally in humble rank, who are employed in reading the Scriptures to the people in Ireland, a question was proposed to a simple, unlearned man, who manifested great love to the sacred book, to this effect:—"If you were threatened with persecution and suffering for retaining your Bible, would you give it up?" A pause ensued, and the question was repeated, with a demand for a reply. "Please your reverence," said the poor man, "and with submission, I think that question is not rightly put" "How so? In what way would you have it expressed?" "Why then, sir, and begging your reverence's pardon, I think you should ask me, if I was threatened such things for keeping my Bible, ought I to give it up? For, sir, how do I know what I would do if I was tempted?"[b]

11, 12. (11) **wise . . conceit,** *comp.* ch. xxvi. 16. The acquisition of riches usually nourishes a peculiar self-confidence. Men are apt to think the skill to get money a proof of extraordinary wisdom.[a] **searcheth him,** tests whether his wisdom is true or counterfeit.[b] (12) **do rejoice,** the idea rather is, when they are set in positions of authority and influence; when rightcousness (not riches) is honoured. **great glory,** *i.e.* there is cause for public glorying and rojoicing. Men have no occasion to hide their joy. **wicked rise,** into power. **hidden,**[c] or hides himself, feels he has nothing to glory in: even needs to hide himself for fear of the malice that may hunt out the good.

Advantages of the rich and poor compared (*v.* 11).—1. The poor

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better." —*Spk. Com.*

c Pr. xv. 8, xxi. 27, lxvi. 18; Jno. iv. 24.

d "Many an immoral man is devout after his fashion. There is often found in men who outrage every principle of morality a certain sentiment of devotion, so that they pray and sing." —*David Thomas, D.D.*

e R. T. S.

a Its ruinous consequences to which the tempter is finally brought.

Re. ii. 14.

"A good intention will no more make a truth, than a fair mark will make a good shoot." —*Spurstowe.*

"A man who is always forgetting his best intentions, may be said to be a thoroughfare of good resolutions." —*Mrs. Jameson.*

"No man is rich whose expenditure exceeds his means; and no one is poor whose incomings exceed his outgoings."—*Haliburton.*

b Whitecross.

a "Wealth has a tendency to make the weak-minded and self-indulgent opiniated and oracular. They imagine their mental tastes more refined, their thoughts more elevated, their intelligence more clear and comprehensive than

have really the advantage of the rich in reference to Divine knowledge. 1. They had the advantage in the days of old: 2. They have also the advantage at this day. II. Account for this fact. 1. The rich are more blinded by prejudice; 2. More enslaved by custom: 3. More deluded by conceit. Learn:—(1) Envy not those who are rich in this world; (2) Seek to be rich towards God.[a]

Force of example.—It is said that upon the Eddystone lighthouse there is inscribed "To give light, and to save life." It is related that, upon one occasion, the wreckers near that coast determined that they would have a night of spoil, and would entice the passing vessels on the shoals and rocks that abound there. One obstacle, however, stood in their way, and only one, and that was, that amidst the darkness of the night, there would be the light on the top of the lighthouse, as a beacon and a mark by which the mariners directed their course along an otherwise trackless deep. To remove that light, therefore, was the great object of the wreckers. How was it to be done? They determined to go in force, and lay violent hands on the keeper. They went, and took both the keeper and his wife away, and rejoiced in the thought of the booty which they would secure on the coming morning from the wrecks of such hapless vessels as might come ashore in the midnight gloom. There was the lighthouse, as they thought, deserted: but as the dusk drew on, and the darkness of night was falling, two little children of the keeper, who had been left behind, finding that there was no light above, knowing the use of that beacon, and guided by the daily example of their father, climbed the ladder, until they reached the topmost story, lit the lamp, and that night there were no wrecks upon the coast. It formed no part of the business of those children to light the lamp; they were not paid by the Government for doing it: they might have pleaded incapacity, they might have trembled to attempt it, but they did not; they had seen their father regularly perform the duty, and, in his absence, they did it for him.

13, 14. (13) **covereth**, tries to hide fr. himself, fr. others, and fr. God.[a] Sin may be covered up by denying it, extenuating it, and forgetting it. **not prosper**, in the effort to cover sin. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Hushing up sin does but increase a man's misery.[b] **confesseth**, 1 Jno. i. 8—10. **forsaketh**, wh. gives the proof of the sincerity of the repentance. The truly penitent strive not to fall into sin after confession.[c] (14) **feareth**, not merely *dreads*, but cherishes a reverent fear[d] of grieving God. True fear is loving awe, sensitiveness to evil. **hardeneth**, *etc.*, resisting the softenings and humblings of the near thought of God.

Sin covered and sin confessed (*v.* 13).—I. The guilt of those who cover their sins, and the misery that awaits them. Men hide their sins—from God, from fellow-men, from themselves. II. The prudence of those who confess and forsake sin, and the happiness awarded. Two ways are indicated by which we may avoid the misery of those who cover their sins—confession and forsaking. Confession is necessary; God demands it. It must be universal, contrite. Sin must be forsaken. This is the touchstone of sincerity.[e]—*The benefit of fearing always* (*v.* 14).—I. I shall describe the fear here recommended. II. I would show

those of other men. Hence they speak with an air of authority."—*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

b "Wealth blunts, poverty sharpens, the critical power of intellect."—*Spk. Com.*

c "When the ungodly reign, it is the ruin of men."—*Vulgate Version.*

"When power is in the hands of the base, good men retire from public affairs."—*Wordsworth.*

1 Ki. xviii. 4; Es. viii. 15—17.

vv. 11, 12. *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 121—123.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Nature is avariciously frugal: in matter it allows no atom to elude its grasp; in mind no thought or feeling to perish. It gathers up the fragments that nothing be lost."—*Dr. Thomas.*

a Ps. xxxii. 3—5.

b "While the patient conceals his distemper he cannot expect a cure."—*Mat. Henry.*

"To cover the sin which lies on the conscience with a layer of earnest efforts to do right will not take the sin away; the underlying sin will assimilate all the dead works that may be heaped upon it, and the result will be a greater mass of sin."—*Dr. Arnot.*

c "O Saviour! our breasts are too oft shut upon

Thee; Thy bosom is ever open to us."—*Bp. Hall.*

d 2 Co. v. 11; Phi. ii. 12.

"One of the great ends of religion is to keep man in constant dependence upon God."—*Bp. Wilson.*

He that lives without fear shall die without hope.

v. 13. *R. Greenham*, 359; *A. Farrindon*, iii. 225; *Abp. Bramhall*, v. 145; *Bp. Sheridan*, i. 35; *Abp. Tillotson*, ix. 56; *E. Waple*, ii. 111; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 81; *Abp. Sharp*, v. 145, vii. 113, etc.

v. 14. *J. Gilbert*, 235; *T. Boston*, iii. 5; *Dr. S. Johnson*, i. 49; *Dr. N. Lardner*, x. 294.

e H. Chatelain.

f Dr. Lardner.

the happiness of him who feareth always. III. I shall endeavour to show how this fear conduces to a man's happiness. IV. Mention some remarks and observations on this subject.*f*

Result of kindness.—A servant of the Rev. Rowland Hill suddenly died, and his master preached his funeral sermon to a numerous audience, in the course of which he mentioned the following anecdote: Many persons present were acquainted with the deceased, and have had it in their power to observe his character and conduct. They can bear witness that I speak the truth when I assert that he has proved himself a perfectly sober, honest, industrious, and religious man, faithfully performing, as far as lay in his power, the duties of his station in life, and serving God with constancy and zeal; yet this very man, this virtuous and pious man, was once a robber on the highway. More than thirty years ago he stopped me on the high-road and demanded my money. Not at all intimidated, I argued with him. I asked him what could induce him to pursue so iniquitous a course of life. "I have been a coachman, sir," said he, "but am now out of place, and not being able to get a character, can get no employment, and am therefore obliged to resort to this means of gaining a subsistence." I desired him to call upon me; he promised he would, and kept his word. I talked further with him, and offered to take him into my service. He consented, and ever since that period he has served me faithfully, and not me only, but he has faithfully served God. And instead of having finished his life in a public ignominious manner, with a depraved and hardened mind, as he probably soon would have done, he has died in peace, rejoicing in hope, and prepared, we trust, for the society of just men made perfect.

15, 16. (15) **roaring lion**, who frightens the beasts, and so prepares them to become his easy prey. **ranging bear**, some prefer *rarening*, in allusion to the "bloodthirstiness" of this beast; but there may be reference to the roaming and stealthy habits. These beasts represent the wicked ruler who oppresses the poor people.*a* (16) **wanteth understanding**, a king who is weak is practically as mischievous as one who is wicked.*b* **covetousness**, regarded here as the real root of kingly oppressions.

A wicked ruler (*v.* 15).—I. His character is delineated by a graphic comparison. 1. Roaring lion—hungry, terrible; 2. Ranging bear—prowling about stealthily in search of prey. II. His victims: the poor, timid, defenceless. III. May be illustrated at this day by the rulers of barbarous countries—Turkey, Egypt, Burmah, etc., where the poor are helplessly oppressed. IV. Rejoice in that King under whose rule the poor, oppressed, orphan, widow, may trust.

Palissy and the king.—There is a most memorable instance, illustrating both the weakness of yielding and the nobleness of holding fast to one's convictions, in the visit of Henry III. of France to Bernard de Palissy in the dungeons of the Bastile. The king desired to give the celebrated potter his liberty, asking, as the price of his pardon, the easy condition of giving up his Protestant faith. "My worthy friend," said the monarch, "you have now been forty-five years in the service of my mother and myself; we have suffered you to retain your religion amidst fire

a Ps. vii. 2, xvii. 12.

b "Let not the world see fear and sad mistrust govern the motion of a kingly eye."—*Shakespeare.*

"One who is poor in discernments."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Kings might be much happier in the *hearts* of their subjects than in their *necks* or *estates*."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 16. *Dr. T. Hunt*, *Obs.* 127.

"I thank the gods, no secret thoughts reproach me. No; I dare challenge heaven to turn me outward, and shake my soul

and slaughter: I am now so pressed by the Guises and my people, that I find myself compelled to deliver you into the hands of your enemies, and to-morrow you will be burnt unless you are converted." "Sire," answered the old man, "I am ready to give up the remainder of my life for the honour of God. You have told me several times that you pity me, and now in my turn I pity you, who use the words, 'I am compelled.' It was not spoken like a king, sire; and they are words which neither you, nor the Guises, nor the people, shall ever make me utter. Sire, I can die." By continually yielding, the monarch had become a slave; by continually acting up to his convictions, the potter had become more than a king.[c]

17, 18. (17) **violence,** *etc.*, taketh the life; committeth murder.[a] The idea is that one who keeps the guilt of blood on his conscience is simply hurrying on his own destruction. **flee,** seeking some refuge. **pit,** emblem of destruction. **stay him,** or try to save him.[b] (18) **uprightly,** note the fig. in this word. His course of life is straight, without a *bend* in it. **saved,** better, *safe*. **perverse . . ways,** better, "He that walks perversely in two ways, will fall in one of the two."[c] Comp. *v.* 6. The evil of vacillation is here reproved.[d]

The murderer's doom (*v.* 17).—I. His crime: murder by whatever means. II. His course: having been guilty of so great a crime, he hurries on with hard heart to destruction. Often his anxious efforts to conceal his crime lead to its detection. III. His isolation: he has no sympathy, no help; all friends even look upon him with horror.

The little murderer.—Two boys in a southern city, named Augustus and Eugene, were playing top. They had but one top, which they spun alternately. At first they played very pleasantly, but soon became angry and began to speak unkindly. Eugene said, "It is my turn to whirl the top." "No, it is not: it is mine," said Augustus. They grew very angry about it. Augustus at length said to Eugene, "You lie!" Eugene struck him. Augustus struck back again. They seized each other in a great rage; and in the scuffle Eugene took a long, sharp knife from his pocket, and stabbed Augustus so that he died in a few moments. Augustus lost his life and Eugene became a murderer, merely to decide whose turn it was to spin a top![e]

19, 20. (19) **tilleth,** *etc.*, see ch. xii. 11. **poverty enough,** or is surfeited with poverty. Contrast with "plenty of bread." (20) **faithful,**[a] one who must do right though he keeps poor. **hastes to be rich,**[b] so does not stop to consider the means he uses. **innocent,** *i.e.* treated as innocent bec. he happens to have succeeded.

The portion of the faithful man (*v.* 20).—I. Who are they who answer to the description here given us? 1. They are faithful to their convictions in things relating to God: 2. To their engagements in things relating to man. II. What are the peculiar blessings reserved for them? 1. The approbation of God; 2. The testimony of a good conscience; 3. A blessed hope of immortality and glory. See then—(1) What is the proper scope and tendency of the Gospel; (2) What bitter self-condemnation waits the impenitent and unbelieving soul.[c]

Unfaithful.—It was the motto of the great commander in war,

quite empty in their sight. A general fierceness dwells with innocence, and conscious virtue is allow'd some pride."—*Dryden.*

c Morse.

a Ge. ix. 6; Ex. xxi. 14.

A man laden with the blood of a soul.

b "By the conviction and execution of a murderer humanity is not extinguished, but enlarged; it is individual compassion overcome by a regard to the general good."—*Fuller.*

c Wordsworth.

Jas. i. 8.

d "As vacillation rises out of want of the one guiding principle of right, it is contrasted with the straightforwardness of the man that 'walketh uprightly.'"—*Spk. Com.*

e Dr. Cheever.

a Pr. xx. 6; 2 Ki. xii. 15, xxii. 7.

b "Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly."—*Lord Bacon.* "I will study more how to give account of my little, than how to make it more."—*Bp. Hall.* What is ill-gotten is commonly ill-spent.

v. 20. *W. Berri-*

man, i. 275; *P. H. Maly*, 57; *J. Rose*, 49.

c C. Simeon, M.A. "When men's intents are wicked, their guilt haunts them, but when they're just, they're arm'd, and nothing daunts them."—*Middleton.*

d Caryl.

to show the facility of his conquests over strongest places and opponents, "I came, I saw, I overcame;" that is, I overcame as soon as I could come and see: but many will have cause sadly to take up this motto, "We came, we saw, we were overcome;" that is, we no sooner came and saw, but we were overcome, we were presently foiled at the eye. This will be the drunkard's complaint at last, yea, when it will be too late,—I came, I saw the wine, and was not only overcome to drink, but overcome by drinking. This will be the covetous man's complaint,—I came and saw the gold, the goodly glitter of worldly shows, and was overcome. This will be the adulterer's complaint,—I looked and lusted, and was overcome.[d]

21, 22. (21) **respect of persons**, here, not the fault of judges, but the way in which the poor too often flatter and toady the rich. **for . . bread**, in order to get it a man will be willing to do any wrong for his patron. (22) **evil eye**, that envies the gains and prosperities of others. **considereth . . him**, "He does not see that that very temper of grudging, carking care is leading him to poverty.

Sycophancy (*v.* 21).—I. The evil here to be noted—"respect of persons." Mark—not character, offices, but persons: to whom respect of various kinds is paid, for—1. Beauty; 2. Wealth; 3. Birth, etc. II. Why this is an evil—"It is not good"—1. For the person who is unwisely respected—fills him with conceit, pride; does him harm mentally, morally, etc.; 2. For the respecter of persons nurses sycophancy, betrays a servile spirit, secures the contempt of the right-minded, often of the person to whom the respect is paid.

Bishop Porteus.—George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, appointed a grand military review to be held on the Sabbath day. The pious and venerable Bishop Porteus, then Bishop of London, heard of it, and though confined to his habitation by that illness which issued in his death five days after, yet he hastened to the palace, and sought an interview with the prince. Feeble and almost voiceless, he entered the royal apartment, supported by two attendants. The scene was very affecting. With the tenderness of a father, and with the earnestness of one expecting to appear before the King of kings, he represented the evil and sin of desecrating God's holy day, and urged upon the prince the consideration of the bad effects which the example of one in his exalted station would have upon the present and eternal destinies of millions. The good bishop closed with the expression of his regret that his infirmities did not permit him to advance and give his last blessing to the heir of England's throne. The prince, much affected, fell on his knees, while the venerable man of God implored the blessing of heaven on his Royal Highness, rejoicing that the last act of his failing strength could thus be exerted in attempting to stop the progress of Sabbath desecration.

23, 24. (23) **rebuketh**, pointing out his fault. He may be disliked at first, but by-and-by he will be recognised as the truest friend.[a] **flattereth**, *etc.*, and glosses over faults in order to keep in favour. (24) **robbeth . . mother**, *comp.* Mat. xv. 5, 6 and Pr. xix. 26.[b] **companion**, *etc.*, stands on the same footing. For "what wickedness will he scruple to commit who will rob his own parents?"[c]

a "The concrete designation of a trifle, a very slight value or advantage of any sort."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Those that are partial must be paltry. Those that have once broken through the bonds of equity, though, at first it must be some great bribe, some noble present, that would bias them, yet, when they have debauched their consciences, they will, at length, be so sordid that for a *piece of bread* they will give judgment against their consciences."—*Mat. Henry.*

vv. 21, 22. *Dr. T. Hunt*, 131, 132.

"Alexander once said to a poltroon, who bore but disgraced his name, 'Either change thy name or change thy ways.' So Christ says to every one of His inconsistent followers."—*John Bate.*

a "He that cries out against his surgeon for hurting him when he is searching his wound, will yet pay him well, and thank him too,

Unfilial dishonesty (*v.* 24).—This crime is committed—I. Under the idea that there is immunity from punishment. A parent does not like to punish by force of law. II. Under the impression that there is less of dishonesty than in robbing a stranger. Folly of regarding all in a house as common property. III. This is the worst form of dishonesty. There is so much of ingratitude in it. IV. Petty pilfering at home the first step in a dishonest life. V. He who robs his parents will be sure to rob God. VI. Many rob the heavenly who would not rob the earthly father.

Tact in reproving.—A general who was in early life much addicted to profane oaths, dates his reformation from a memorable check he received from a Scottish clergyman. When he was a lieutenant, and stationed at Newcastle, he got involved in a brawl with some of the lowest class in the public street, and the altercation was carried on by both parties with abundance of impious language. The clergyman, passing by, was shocked with the profanity, and stepping into the crowd with his cane uplifted, thus addressed one of the leaders of the rabble:—"Oh, John, John! what is this I hear? You, only a poor collier boy, and swearing like any lord in all the land. Oh, John! have you no fear of what will become of you? It may do very well for this gallant gentleman (pointing to the lieutenant) to bang and swear as he pleases; but you—but you, John! it is not for you, or the like of you, to take in vain the name of Him in whom ye live and have your being." Then turning to the lieutenant, he continued, "Ye'll excuse the poor man, sir, for swearing; he is an ignorant body, and kens no better." The young officer slunk away in confusion, unable to make any reply. Next day he made it his business to wait on the minister, and thanked him sincerely for his well-timed reproof, and has ever since been an example of the strictest purity of language.[d]

25, 26. (25) **proud**,[a] better *covetous;* the man of large cupidity, who is avaricious and insatiable. Big with selfish ambitions. **made fat**, or prospered and blessed.[b] (26) **own heart**, here, his mere impulses. **wisely**, *i.e.* carefully, considerately;[c] but with reference to previous verse, looking for grace from God.

Self-confidence reproved (*v.* 26).—I. What is the conduct here reprobated? Such a man—1. Relies on his own wisdom and understanding; 2. On his own purposes and resolutions. II. The folly of it. 1. It robs us of the benefit we might derive from trusting in God; 2. It ensures beyond all doubt our ultimate disappointment; 3. It will keep us from discovering our error till it is past a remedy. See, then, from hence—(1) How desirable itself is knowledge; (2) How necessary is the knowledge of Christ.[d]

A little girl.—A little girl was passing by a garden in which were some very pretty flowers. She wished much to have some of them; she could have put her hand between the rails, and have taken them, and perhaps nobody would have seen her. But she knew this would have been very wicked; it would be stealing. So, after thinking a little while, she resolved what she would do. She went to the mistress of the garden, and asked her very prettily to give her some of those nice flowers. The mistress told her she had done right not to take them, and then showed

when he has cured it."—*Mat. Henry.*

b "Such, though heirs, are virtually thieves to be ranked with highwaymen."—*Fausset*

c "The aggravation of sin is proportioned to the obligation of duty. A murderer is a heinous transgressor; how much more a parricide! To rob a stranger, a friend, is evil; how much more a father and mother! The filial obligation of cherishing care is broken. Ingratitude is added to injustice."—*Bridges.* Honest industry is always rewarded. No young man need complain of being kept poor, if he rolls up his sleeves and goes cheerfully to work.

d Whitecross.

a "Or puffed-up soul, self-confident, and hence overbearing and litigious."—*Fausset.*

b "Though the mariner sees not the polestar, yet the needle of the compass, which points to it, tells him which way he sails. Thus the heart that is touched with the loadstone of Div. love, trembling with godly fear, and yet still looking towards God by fixed believing, interprets the fear by the love in the fear, and tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the haven of eternal rest."—*Abp. Leighton.*

Eph. v. 15.

v. 26. *Dr. R. South*, vi. 399; *Bp. Shuttleworth*, i. 169; *Dr. T. Dwight*, ii. 47; *H. E. Manning*, 392.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d R. T. S.

a De. xv. 7.

b Is. i. 15.

e "Good men retire from public business into obscurity when the dregs of the nation rise up to the summit of public affairs, and float as scum upon the surface."—*Wordsworth.*

"As the deepest hate may spring from the most violent love, so the greatest ingratitude may arise from the largest benefits. It is said that Cicero was slain by one whom his oratory had defended when he was accused of his father's murder."—*J. Beaumont.*

"Formerly it was the fashion to preach the natural; now it is the ideal. People too often forget that these things are profoundly compatible; that in a beautiful work of imagination the natural should be ideal, and the ideal natural."—*A. W. Von Schlegel.*

d R. T. S.

a Ex. xxxii. 9; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 16; Ne. ix. 29; Is. xlviii. 8; Je. xvii. 23, xxxi. 18; Ac. vii. 51.

her another garden full of beautiful plants and flowers, and gathered for her a fine large nosegay. Let this teach you a lesson. If this girl had taken the flowers without leave, she would have been very unhappy; and if she had been asked how she came by them, she would most likely have told a lie to hide her first fault. And how uncomfortable she would have felt at night when she lay down, and when she thought of the great God, and prayed to Him who has said, "Thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God." "Be sure your sin will find you out," if you break God's commands.[d]

27, 28. (27) **not lack**, the needful for himself.[a] **hideth**, *etc.*,[b] with the intention of disregarding the wants and cries of the poor. (28) **wicked rise**, *comp v.* 12.[c]

The generous man (*v.* 27).—Something is here said by implication of—I. His hand. He giveth. II. His eye. The cause he knows not: he searches out. Many when aware of the approach of the poor look another way. III. His heart. Sympathising, benevolent, tender. IV. His mind. He works and saves, that he may give. Two collectors for a charity calling on a rich man found him scolding a servant for some trifling waste, and were the more surprised at receiving a large donation. He said that his thrift enabled him to give the more. V. His recompense. God takes care that he shall have somewhat to give. Learn:—1. Let the rich remember their duty to the poor; 2. Let the poor rejoice that God takes care of their rich helpers.

Rev. Matthew Henry.—It is related of the excellent commentator, Matthew Henry, that he enforced upon himself and others sentiments calculated to promote a charitable disposition. "We lose," said he, "what we save. Withholding that which is meet tends to spiritual poverty—the worst of all husbandry: it is like grudging seed to the ground." As occasion served, he plainly pointed out the great evil of covetousness. Sometimes he urged upon all around him their exposure to that sin, and advised them to suspect themselves guilty of it. "We are born," said he, "with the world in our hearts." Noticing that many think themselves free from covetousness because they are content with what they have, he added, in allusion to the parable—"So was that fool." In the exercise of a benevolent temper, this good man resembled Him who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Like the children of the Highest, therefore, he was "kind to the unthankful, and to the evil." After lending seven guineas to obtain a discharge of the son of a poor friend, who had enlisted in the army, he observed that many reasons offered themselves why he should have abandoned him; but, in the spirit of genuine Christianity, he added, "The mercy of God to me, a provoking, backsliding sinner, answered them all. God doth not cut them off, though, by their iniquity, they have sold themselves."[d]

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1, often reproved, *lit.* a man of reproofs. **hardeneth his neck**,[a] in a stiff-necked way persists in carrying through his own will. Allusion is made to the intractable, stubborn ox. He will not bend to the yoke, so he must be killed. **without**

remedy, for who can help a man who thus refuses to be helped? Lit. "they shall be destroyed, and no healing."

The conduct and punishment of sinners (*v.* 1).—I. Here is the conduct of an incorrigible sinner described. 1. He is often reproved; 2. He hardeneth his neck. II. The punishment of incorrigible sinners threatened. 1. He shall suddenly be destroyed; 2. He shall be destroyed without remedy. Apply:—(1) The season of God's long-suffering is limited; (2) Those who defer repentance deceive their own souls: (3) The reproofs of God should be regarded as expressions of His mercy; (4) Seasonable subjection to God's authority will be attended with certain salvation.[b]

Dying while blaspheming.—A minister in a small seaport town in Scotland once furnished an account of a man who for many years was master of a coasting vessel, and an inhabitant of that place. In his younger days he made a profession of religion; and, among the small but respectable body to which he belonged, he was deemed an eminent Christian. He afterwards became a deist!—nay, a professed atheist, and made the existence of the Deity and a future state the subjects of his ridicule and profane mockery. For horrid swearing and lewdness he had perhaps few equals in Scotland. One night, in a public-house, when swearing awfully in a rage, he was summoned into eternity in a moment by the rupture of a blood-vessel. Was he punished for his blasphemy before his death? If not, then he was punished afterwards.[c]

2, 3. (2) **righteous**, *etc.*, comp. ch. xxviii. 12. (3) **wisdom**, here the counsels of moral purity. **keepeth company**, or, more forcibly, *who feedeth.* **harlots**, who "play sad havoc with families; they draw sons to ruin and parents to an untimely grave."[a] **spendeth**, *i.e.* wasteth.

Two kinds of rulers (*v.* 2).—I. The righteous are joy-producers. 1. As they enact good laws; 2. As they administer law impartially; 3. As they set a good example; 4. As they strive to minimise the public burdens. II. The wicked are sorrow-makers, for reasons the opposite of those which mark the rule of the righteous.

The tradesman and the prince.—The following anecdote of the prince, which is not, perhaps, generally known, seems a very suitable accompaniment:—A tradesman was sent for on the Sabbath day, as his Royal Highness was preparing to leave town early the next morning. That tradesman was one who feared God more than man; and at the risk of offending the prince and losing his valuable patronage, he declined to attend on God's day, but took care to be at the palace at a very early hour on Monday morning. "I sent for you yesterday," said the prince; "why did you not come?" "Your Royal Highness, the King wanted me." "The king! I thought my father never sent for tradesmen on Sundays." "Please your Royal Highness, I do not mean the king your father, but the King of kings." A word fitly spoken is indeed, as Solomon says, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Some of the last words of the prince, when wearing the crown as George the Fourth, alluded to his interview with the dying bishop (Porteus). Two days before his death he declared that nothing in his past life gave him more uneasiness than the recollection of desecrated Sabbaths.[b]

Pr. i. 24—27; Ro. xi. 22.

v. 1. *W. Fenner*, i. 121; *Dr. Jer. Hunt*, iv. 173; *S. Davies*, ii. 236; *J. Parry*, 319; *J. Milner*, iii. 1.

b Alpha in 100 Sks.

"There be many Christians most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land doth move when they ship, and they themselves are moved. Just so not a few do imagine that God moveth, and saileth, and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration, to ebbing and flowing. But the foundation of the Lord abideth sure."—*Samuel Rutherford.*

c Dr. Cheever.

a "She weaves the winding sheets of souls, and lays them in the urn of everlasting death."—*Pollok.*

v. 2. *R. Bolton, Four Last Things*, 1—37; *Dr. S. Johnson*, ii. 199.

"If you would be well with a great mind, leave him with a favourable impression of you; if with a little mind, leave him with a favourable opinion of himself."—*Coleridge.*

"Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship."—*Franklin.*

b Tract Magazine.

4. by judgment, or the just administration of justice. By righteous decisions, as opposed to those which are given on the persuasions of bribes,[a] receiveth gifts, *lit.* "a man of heave-offerings." overthroweth it, bec. nothing so unsettles a nation as corruption in the seat of judgment.

Peter the Great.—In the year 1718 Peter the Great assembled a grand council, in order to state to them a new project of internal government. When they were met, he first reminded them of the duty of all monarchs to protect their people from foreign assaults; to preserve peace, order, and quiet, at home; and to execute justice alike against the prince, the peer, and the peasant; he added, that he then found it necessary to turn his attention towards repressing and correcting the abuses of power and authority of some of his governors of the provinces, and of the lieutenants under them, who he found had been guilty of oppression and peculation, and had enriched themselves at the expense of his people—a people, whose contributions and sacrifices had, for eighteen years, merited every attention, and now called for him to defend them against all such bloodsuckers. The emperor then announced that he had established a tribunal of justice, for the inquiry into, and the redressing of, all abuses; and that he had appointed as president the most honest of his counsellors. Among those brought before this new council or chamber of justice, were Princes Menzikof and Dolgorouckí, the grand admiral, and other minor offenders. The court, in its inquiries, spared neither rank nor influence, and brought before its bar Baron Schafiroff, the vice-chancellor, the favourite of the emperor, and his prime minister. The baron was convicted on several charges; one of which was for raising the rates of postage, and keeping the advance for himself; and another for giving his brother a lucrative situation, unknown to the emperor or senate. The baron was condemned to death. When the day of execution came, the people were summoned by sound of trumpet; he was led to the public place, and his sentence read to him; but when his head was laid on the block, and the axe raised over him, a herald proclaimed the mercy of the emperor, in changing the sentence of death for perpetual banishment to Siberia, with the confiscation of all his property. This severity had, however, a good effect, in rendering the administration less corrupt.[b]

5, 6. (5) flattereth, *comp.* ch. xxvi. 28. net, *etc.*, by misleading the man as to his real character, he puts him in the power of the tempter.[a] (6) a snare, for the man himself: entanglement *in* it, and punishment at the *end* of it.[b] sing, in the confidence and joy of his security.

The gladness of goodness (*v.* 6).—The righteous rejoices—I. In the works and ways of God. II. In the comfortable assurance of his own mind. III. In the prosperity of other men. IV. At all times: "songs in the night." V. At the prospect of a glorious resurrection.

Abdallah and the fly.—"It was the third hour of the day, and Abdallah still lingered over the morning repast, when there came a little fly and alighted on the rim of his goblet. It sipped a particle of syrup and was gone. It came next morning, and the next, and the next again, till it caught the eye of the scholar. As he considered it, and as it gave forth its many colours and moved itself aright, it seemed beautiful exceedingly, and in his heart he could not

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a "A king must make religion the rule of government, and not to balance the scale; for he that casteth in religion only to make the scales even, his own weight is contained in those characters, —*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*, he is found too light, his kingdom shall be taken from him. Religion is rectitude."—*Lord Bacon.* Is. xxxii. 1, 2. *v.* 4. *T. Goddard*, 51. "What makes the capital of nations? Savings! nothing else. Neither nations nor men are safe against fortune unless they can hit on a system by which they save more than they spend. When that system is once established, at what a ratio capital accumulates! What resources the system gradually develops! In that one maxim is the secret of England's greatness."—*Caxtoniana.*

b *Percy Anec.*

a "When we are most commended for our discernment we generally act most foolishly, for those very praises cloud the understanding and pervert the judgment."—*Scott.*

"He does this even when he is not intending it; the web of enticing errors before his neighbours' eyes becomes, when he comes into con-

find to drive it away. Wherefore it came day by day continually, and waxing bolder and bolder it withal became greater and greater, till in the size as of a locust could be perceived as the likeness of a man; and the greater that it grew, the more winning were its ways, frisking like a sunbeam, singing like a peri, so that the eyes of the simple one were blinded, and in all this he did not perceive the subtlety of an evil jinn. Wherefore, waxing bolder and yet bolder, whatsoever of dainty meats its soul desired the lying spirit freely took, and when, waxing wroth, the son of the prophet said, 'This is my daily portion from the table of the mufti; there is not enough for thee and me.' playing one of its pleasant tricks, the brazen-faced deceiver caused the simple one to smile; until in process of time the scholar perceived that as his guest waxed stronger and stronger, he himself waxed weaker and weaker. Now also there arose frequent contention between the demon and his dupe, and the youth smote the demon so sore that it departed for a season. Thereupon Abdallah rejoiced exceedingly, and said, 'I have triumphed over mine enemy, and when it seemeth good in my sight I shall smite him that he die.' But after not many days, lo and behold! the jinn came again, arrayed in goodly garments, and bringing a present in its hand, and with its fair speech saying, 'Is it not a little one?' it enticed this silly dove so that he again received it into his chamber. On the morrow, when Abdallah came not into the assembly of studious youths, the mufti said, 'Wherefore tarrieth the son of the faithful? perchance he sleepeth.' Therefore they resorted even to his chamber, and knocked, and lifted up their voice; but as he made no answer the mufti opened the door, and behold! on the divan lay the dead body of his disciple. His visage was black and swollen, and on his throat was the pressure of a finger broader than the palm of a mighty man. All the stuff belonging to the hapless one was gone, the gold and the jewels, and the parchment rolls, and the changes of raiment; and in the soft earth of the garden was discerned the footsteps of a giant. The mufti measured one of the prints, and lo! it was six cubits long. What means the apologue? Who can expound the riddle? Is it the bottle or the betting-book? is it the billiard-table? is it the theatre, or the tea-garden, or the music saloon? is it laziness? is it debt? is it the wasted Sunday? But know that an evil habit is an elf constantly expanding. It may come in at the keyhole, but it will soon grow too big for the house. At first it may seem too trivial for serious attack, but it will presently prove the death of the owner."[c]

tact with them, a net in wh. he is caught."—*Hitzig.* "Flattery is a bad sort of money to which our vanity gives currency."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

b "A flatterer spreads a net for a *friend's* feet, but a sinner lays a snare for *himself.*"—*Wordsworth.*

v. 5. *Dr. S. South,* vii. 136; *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 134; *A. Macdonald,* 235.

"Many times God is present in the still voice, and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life; when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more laborious and expensive actions are profitable to others only, like a tree of balsam distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use."—*Doddridge.*

Confine your expenses, or they will confine you.

c Dr. J. Hamilton.

7. cause . . poor, Job xxix. 13—16. regardeth not, careth not, will not set himself to consider them. Or, "He listens to no reason, he has no sensibility for right and equity."[a]

Louis IX. and the kitchen-boy.—Louis IX., king of France, was found instructing a poor kitchen-boy; and being asked why he did so, replied, "The meanest person hath a soul as precious as my own, and bought with the same blood of Christ."[b]

a Hitzig.

v. 7. *T. Jee,* 11.

b Dr. Cheever.

8, 9. (8) scornful,[a] mockers, such as head civil strife. Such as contemptuously disregard God's law, and are not swayed by moral principles or national virtues. bring . . snare, better, "set the city on fire:" kindle, with their inflammatory counsels,

a "Such as scorn to be hampered by laws and constitutions."—*Mat. Henry.*

the fire of civil discord.[b] wrath, if it is found among the people.[c] (9) rage or laugh, try to influence him by denunciations, or humble him by satire: his work will be in vain. The foolish, and frivolous will learn of no masters.

Civic firebrands (*v.* 8).—Such men bring a city into a snare—I. When as rulers they treat an enemy of unknown resources with contempt. II. When as noisy demagogues they inflame the passions of the vulgar. III. When as talebearers they spread slanderous reports. IV. When as scorners of good morals they exert a baneful influence upon fellow-citizens. V. Even the city of God, the Church, may be ensnared by teachers of false doctrines.

The scoffer silenced.—A minister of the Presbyterian Church, in America, delivered a series of discourses against infidelity, in a town in Louisiana, on the Red River, some of the citizens of which were known to be sceptical. A few days afterwards he took passage in a steamer ascending the Mississippi, and found on board several of the citizens of that town, among whom was a disciple of Tom Paine, noted as the ringleader of a band of infidels. So soon as he discovered the minister, he commenced his horrid blasphemies; and when he perceived him reading at one of the tables, he proposed to his companions to go with him to the opposite side of the table and listen to some stories that he had to tell upon religion and religious men, which he said would annoy the old preacher. Quite a number, prompted by curiosity, gathered around him to listen to his vulgar stories and anecdotes, all of which were pointed against the Bible and its ministers. The preacher did not raise his eyes from the book which he was reading, nor appear to be in the least disconcerted by the presence of the rabble. At length the infidel walked up to him, and, rudely slapping him on the shoulder, said, "Old fellow, what do you think of these things?" He calmly pointed out of the door, and said, "Do you see that beautiful landscape spread out in such quiet loveliness before you?" "Yes." "It has a variety of flowers, plants, and shrubs, that are calculated to fill the beholder with delight." "Yes." "Well, if you were to send out a dove, he would pass over that scene and see in it all that was beautiful and lovely, and delight himself in gazing at and admiring it; but if you were to send out a buzzard over precisely the same scene, he would see in it nothing to fix his attention, unless he could find some rotten carcase that would be loathsome to all other animals, in which case he would alight and gloat upon it with exquisite pleasure." "Do you mean to compare me to a buzzard, sir?" said the infidel, colouring very deeply. "I made no allusion to you, sir," said the minister, very quietly. The infidel walked off in confusion, and went by the name of "The Buzzard" during the remainder of the passage.

10, 11. (10) bloodthirsty, *Heb.* "men of blood." Ps. v. 6, xxvi. 9. seek, *etc.*, *i.e.* care for, in order to preserve, the righteous. (11) all his mind,[a] no matter how imprudent the occasion. Over-free speech is characteristic of the foolish. Or mind may here stand for *spirit*, passion. The foolish man has no self-restraint.

A wise reticence (*v.* 11).—I. The fool's speech. 1. He is swift to speak; 2. Speaks abundantly, "utters all his mind:" 3. Speaks worthlessly, because he is a fool: what he calls his mind is not a

[b] "Set the minds of the people on fire against the powers that be."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] "Nothing can make a man so good a patriot as religion."—*Bp. Hall.*

"If a bee stings you, will you go to the hive and destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? If you receive a trifling injury, do not go about the streets proclaiming it, and be anxious to avenge it. Let it drop. It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you may have received."—*Anon.*

"The best ground untilled, soonest runs out into rank weeds. A man of knowledge that is either negligent or uncorrected, cannot but grow wild and godless."—*Bp. Hall.*

"In persons grafted in a serious trust, negligence is a crime."—*Shakespeare.*

"It is better to sound a person with whom one deals afar off, than to fall upon the point at first."—*Bacon.*

[a] Usually they that speak much, speak much amiss.

"He is wise who knows when to hold his peace."—*Ambrose.*

"We must not always speak all

storehouse of good things: he is quick to form an opinion and to retail it. II. The wise man's silence. 1. He keeps his knowledge for a time, to compare, to digest; 2. But not for ever, only till "afterwards," as One who said, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now."

Conversation.—In Andrew Fuller's diary is the following entry:—"Jan. 3, 1782. This afternoon, being on a visit, as I stepped aside from the company, I overheard one of them saying, 'I love Mr. Fuller's company, it is so diverting.' This expression moved me much. Oh, wretch that I am! Is this to have my speech seasoned with grace? O Lord, forgive me! Some humbling thoughts for the above in prayer." "Jan. 4. Tender this morning in remembering the above circumstance. Lord, make me more spiritual in time to come."[b]

12, 13. (12) **to lies,** all sorts of talebearing.[a] **wicked,** knowing just what pleases their master, they will become informers and backbiters. (13) **deceitful man,** or usurer. He takes his advantage of the poor. **lighteneth,** *etc.*, He knows both. "He is their common Father and Judge." "Both depend on Him, and He will do justice."[b]

Open ears and nimble tongues (*v.* 12).—I. A ruler with an open ear; ready to hear anything; easily imposed upon; plenty to detract from others, and be the purveyors of scandal: most that will be told him will be false. II. The servants' nimble tongues; each one anxious to get favour for himself; hopes to do this by depreciating others; the ruler hears of each in turn, and according to the tale of each, all save himself are wicked. III. The The judicial mind. The ruler should bring the traducer and the traduced face to face; this done at once and in the first instance would operate as a caution to others.

Legend of scandal.—Two nuns of the sisterhood of St. Scholastica, though in other respects exemplary, and faithful to their religious profession, were much given to scandal and vain talk. Which being told to St. Benedict, it displeased him greatly: and he sent to them a message, that if they did not refrain their tongues, and set a better example to the community, he would excommunicate them. The nuns were at first alarmed and penitent, and promised amendment: but the habit was too strong for their good resolves. They continued their vain and idle talking; and, in the midst of their folly, they died, and, being of great and noble lineage, they were buried in the church near the altar. And afterwards, on a certain day, as St. Benedict solemnised mass at that altar, and at the moment when the officiating deacon uttered the usual words, "Let those who are excommunicated, and forbidden to partake, depart and leave us," behold! the two nuns rose up from their graves, and, in the sight of all the people, with faces drooping and averted, they glided out of the church. And thus it happened every time that the mass was celebrated there, until St. Benedict, taking pity upon them, absolved them from their sins, and they rested in peace.[c]

14, 15. (14) **judgeth the poor,**[a] who cannot secure decisions by bribes. **faithfully,** here is in strict accordance with the facts testified to. (15) **rod,** the symbol of parental correction.[b] It is not essential to wise training that physical suffering should be inflicted. **left to himself,** "left loose, as a horse

we know, that were folly; but what a man says should be what he thinks, otherwise it is knavery."—*Montaigne.*

"It is a shameful thing to be weary of inquiry, when what we search for is excellent."—*Cicero.*

b C. H. Spurgeon.

a "He that carrieth Satan in his ear is no less blameworthy than he wh. carrieth him in his tongue."—*Muffet.*

b "Here is comfort to the poor in his sufferings; here is warning to the rich in his violence."—*Wordsworth.*

"A man who takes delight in hearing the faults of others, shows sufficiently that he has a true relish of scandal, and consequently the seeds of this vice within him. If his mind is gratified with hearing the reproaches which are cast on others, he will find the same pleasure in relating them, and be the more apt to do it, as he will naturally imagine every one he converses with is delighted in the same manner with himself."—*Addison.*

c Mrs. Jameson.

a Pr. xx. 28, xxv. 5. "So that he permits true judgment to reach the poor."—*Hitzig.*

without a rein."[c] Pampered and indulged.[d] "Exempted fr. discipline, left to his own will."[e]

Neglected childhood (*v.* 15).—Here we have two persons described. I. The neglected child—1. Is he who is petted, spoiled, by over-indulgence: 2. Never corrected for his faults; 3. His mother fond and foolish. II. The disgraced mother. 1. By her daughter, through loss of virtue by uncurbed vanity; 2. By her son, through loss of honour by unchecked conceit: 3. Or she is impoverished by their profligacy, as well as sorrow-stricken by their crime. Learn:—(1) Train up a child in the way he should go, etc.: (2) Expect such results, for folly is bound up in the heart of a child.

Obedience enforced.—"A child," says a modern writer, "a short time since, was taken ill with that dangerous disorder, the croup. He was a child most ardently beloved, and ordinarily very obedient. But in this state of uneasiness and pain he refused to take the medicine which it was needful without delay to administer. The father finding him resolute, immediately punished his sick and suffering son; under these circumstances, and fearing his son might soon die, it must have been a severe trial to the father; but the consequence was that the child was taught that sickness was no excuse for disobedience, and while his sickness continued, he promptly took whatever medicine was prescribed, and was patient and submissive. Soon the child was well. Does any one say this was cruel? It was one of the noblest acts of kindness which could have been performed. If the father had shrunk from duty here, it is by no means improbable that the life of the child would have been the forfeit."[f]

16, 17. (16) **wicked . . increaseth**, this is a general truth; wicked men encourage one another, and so increase wickedness; or reference may be to wicked kings, who encourage the wicked in the land. **see . . fall**, and triumph in it;[a] look on it with satisfaction. (17) **correct**, as *v.* 15.[b] **delight**, lit. *delights*, the plural signifying the variety of forms of pleasure, in well-trained children, which parents may gain.

Causes of public immorality (*v.* 16).—I. A case supposed—"the wicked multiplied." 1. By miscarriage of justice—undetected crime: 2. Venality of officers of justice; 3. By personal influence of ungodly; 4. By neglected youth—as, from the connection, this seems to be the cause indicated. II. The result anticipated. 1. Increase of transgressors; 2. Reign of lawlessness: 3. One encouraging and tempting another. III. The inevitable issue. 1. Transgressors shall fall, "though wickedness join hand in hand," etc.; 2. The righteous shall see it. Hence we infer that while the wicked shall fall, the righteous will look safely on.

Parental reproof.—A young man who, when an infant, had lost his father, remarked to a person in conversation, "Whenever I was guilty of disobeying my mother, and she called me to account, she would talk to me seriously, and then kneel down in prayer and tell God all about my conduct, and the consequences of my course. I used to feel at such times as if my heart would burst, and I have often said, 'Ma, whip, but don't talk to me and pray for me.' Ah," said he, "it was the talking and praying that affected me more than the whipping, though all were necessary."

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b Comp. Pr. xiii. 24, xxiii. 13.

c Wordsworth.

d "The mother who thus yields weakly to what is really a self-indulgence, is as guilty of abandoning the child she spoils, as if she cast him forth: and inasmuch as evil neglect no less than evil act works out its own punishment, there shall fall upon her the righteous punishment of shame and ignominy."—*Spk. Com.*

e O. Zöckler.

v. 15. *J. Archer*, 88; *W. Barrow*, iii. 185; *Bishop Maltby*, i. 143.

f Whitecross.

a Ps. xxxvii. 34—38, lviii. 10, 11.

"This is indeed the supporting joy of faith, to realise the glory of this day, when the righteous shall see the fall of the now triumphing wicked, and one universal shout shall swell throughout the earth, 'Alleluiah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!'"—*Bridges.*

b Pr. xiii. 24, xix. 18, xxii. 15, xxiii. 13, 14.

"Not mine, this saying, but the sentence of the sage, nothing is stronger than necessity."—*Euripides.*

c Whitecross.

18. no vision, as 1 Sa. iii. 1. "Redemptive revelations of God are meant."[a] More generally, instruction in God's truth, given mainly in those days by prophets, who received visions. people perish, *lit.* "are let loose,"[b] like hair dishevelled. Are undisciplined, unbridled. Are deprived of moral restraints. Hos. iv. 6.

Divine vision essential to human salvation (*v.* 18).—I. True vision is a revelation from God. Such a communication is probable from—1. The conflicting indications of the Divine character furnished by nature; 2. The universally felt moral necessities of man. II. There are many places where, as yet, this vision is not. III. Where it is not the people perish. 1. It alone reveals a Saviour adapted to man; 2. It alone is associated with spiritual power to deliver man from the bondage, and misery, and guilt, and doom of sin. Learn:—(1) The vision of God is, to those who possess it, a most precious thing; (2) They who possess it not ought to be the objects of the deepest compassion; (3) They who possess it are bound by every consideration of gratitude and pity to send it to those who do not.[c]

Power of the Scriptures.—The power and efficacy of the Scripture upon the souls of men showeth it to be of God; and the wonderful alteration that it makes in a man for God, when he doth entertain and believe it in his heart. It makes him more than a man in power to oppose, resist, and fight against his own corruptions; it brings him into a wonderful familiarity and acquaintance with God. It puts such life and strength into him that, for God's sake and His truth, he can suffer all the hardest things in the world without complaining, yea, with exceeding and wonderful rejoicing.[d]

19, 20. (19) servant, or slave. Reference is to one who lacks right principle, who is stubborn and sulky. words, *i.e.* words alone. He needs chastisement.[a] no answer, in obedient action. Mere words are insufficient in dealing with the *slave-like temper*. (20) hasty, *etc.*, see ch. xxvi. 12. of a fool, *i.e.* of a modest fool, who is sensible of his folly. The free talker is usually the conceited boaster.

Servants and servants (*v.* 19).—I. Servants of all qualities may need to be occasionally corrected. The employer must have his work done in his own way since he pays for it, though it may not be the best way. II. Some servants are pert, give saucy answers, show they forget their position, prove that they are intractably conceited. III. Others are sulky, will not answer at all, either by apology or promise of amendment. IV. God is the great Master of all; He issues distinct commands all may understand, and should promptly make confession of fault and promise of improvement.

Anger.—An American physician of eminence was walking one summer's morning in his garden, when he found that some orders, which he had given to his gardener, had not been obeyed. He sharply rebuked the man, who replied with equal warmth. High words ensued; and when the gentleman returned into the house, his whole frame quivered with the intensity of his rage. In the most violent manner he continued to denounce the conduct of his servant, until passion became so powerful as to paralyse the functions of the body, and he fell dead in the midst of his family.

a David Thomas, D.D.

Is. i. 1; Nah. i. 1.

b "The word *vision* represents the erudition and teaching of the ministry. Where that fails, the people are scattered into a variety of sects, and into a wilderness of unbelief and of evil living."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Or 'are made naked.' Stripped of their ornaments and so exposed to shame; stripped of their armour, and so exposed to danger."—*Mat. Henry.*

c 18. *T. Boston*, iii. 372.

c J. M. Jarvie.

Bonaventure wrote out the Scriptures twice, and learned most of them by heart.

d E. Leigh (1647).

a "If thou wouldst have a good servant, let the servant find thee a good master. Be not angry with him too long, lest he think thee malicious; nor too soon, lest he conceive thee rash; nor too often, lest he count thee humorous."—*Quarles.*

The Emperor Valentinian punished the Quadi with great severity; and when they came to implore his mercy, he upbraided them with every mark of resentment, and spoke with such vehemence, that he broke a blood-vessel, and fell lifeless on the ground.

21, 22. (21) **delicately**, *i.e.* that pampers him ;[a] allows him undue familiarity and indulgence. Only at penalty can any one be pushed out of his natural place. Each must be dealt with appropriately to their station. **become . . son**, *i.e.* assume the place and privilege of one. Some render the word used *ungrateful*, or *refractory*. (22) **angry**, *etc.*, as ch. xv. 18.

The spoiled servant (*v.* 21).—I. The cause of this unwise treatment. 1. The unwise preference of the master ; 2. The sneaking duplicity of the servant ; 3. Often the absence of a trusted domestic companion ; sometimes the fact that the children are disobedient : 4. Frequently through not perceiving the proper relations of parties. II. The consequences that flow from it. 1. The gradual ascendency of the servant, until he obtains power, through a knowledge of the master's private affairs ; 2. The displacement of the children from the parent's love ; 3. The entire family at length tyrannised over by the servant.

Swift's butler. — During the publication of the *Drapier's Letters*, Swift was particularly careful to conceal himself from being known as the author. The only persons in the secret were Robert Blakely, his butler, whom he employed as an amanuensis, and Dr Sheridan. It happened that on the very evening before the proclamation, offering a reward of £300 for discovering the author of these letters, was issued, Robert Blakely stopped out later than usual without his master's leave. The dean ordered the door to be locked at the accustomed hour, and shut him out. The next morning the poor fellow appeared before his master with marks of great contrition. Swift would hear no excuses, but, abusing him severely, bade him strip off his livery, and quit the house instantly. "What!" said he, "is it because I am in your power that you can dare to take these liberties with me? Get out of my house, and receive the reward of your treachery. Mrs. Johnson (Stella), who was at the deanery, did not interfere, but immediately despatched a messenger to Dr. Sheridan, who, on his arrival, found Robert walking up and down the hall in great agitation. The doctor bade him not be uneasy, as he would try to pacify the dean, so that he should continue in his place. "That is not what vexes me," replied Robert, "though to be sure I should be sorry to lose so good a master ; but what grieves me to the soul is that my master should have so bad an opinion of me as to suppose me capable of betraying him for any reward whatever." When this was related to the dean he was so struck with the honour and generosity of sentiment which it exhibited in one so humble in life, that he immediately restored him to his situation, and was not long in rewarding his fidelity. The place of verger to the cathedral becoming vacant, Swift called Robert to him, and asked him if he had any clothes of his own that were not a livery. Robert replying in the affirmative, he desired him to take off his livery, and put them on. The poor fellow, quite astonished, begged to know what crime he had commited, that he was to be discharged. The dean bade him do as he was ordered ; and when he returned in his new dress, the dean called all the other servants into the room, and told them that they were no longer to consider him as their fellow-servant, Robert, but as Mr. Blakely, verger of St. Patrick's Cathedral ; an office which he had bestowed on him

[a] Heb. *pânak*.

"He who indulgeth his slave from his youth will find him at length behaving as his offspring."—*Elzas.*

v. 21. *T. Hunt*, Obs. 139

"That man is guilty of impertinence who considers not the circumstances of time, or engrosses the conversation, or makes himself the subject of his discourse, or pays no regard to the company he is in."—*Tully.*

"The way to avoid the imputation of impudence is not to be ashamed of what we do, but never to do what we ought to be ashamed of."—*Tully.*

"The only disadvantage of an honest heart is credulity."—*P. Sidney.*

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—*Pope.*

"If you have nothing, be an honest beggar, rather than a respectable thief."—*Emerson.*

"Honesty coupled to beauty, is to have honey a sauce to sugar."—*Shakespeare.*

[b] *Percy Anec.*

for his faithful services, and as a proof of that sure reward which honesty and fidelity would always obtain.[b]

23, 24. (23) pride, *etc.*,[a] as ch. xvi. 18, xviii. 12. honour shall uphold, or "such shall lay hold on honour"[b] (ch. xi. 16). (24) partner . . thief, may not be himself a thief, but he cannot keep from himself the shame of his partner's wrong-doing. As the concealer of the thief he must share the thief's penalty. heareth cursing, the public declaration of the crime. bewrayeth,[c] does not reveal the thief; keeps silence.

Martyn and the gownsman.—When the Rev. Henry Martyn was at college, he was called to visit a family in great distress on account of the expected death of the husband and father. Some of the family, lest the agony of their grief should add to the distress of the dying man, had removed to another house, where Martyn found a gownsman reading a play to them with a view to their consolation. He very properly rebuked him with some severity for this great impropriety, and was led to fear, from the manner in which his reproof was received, that some unpleasant results might follow. But mark the goodness of God, in blessing the means employed for the advancement of His glory. When this gownsman again saw Martyn, it was to thank him for his faithful admonition, which proved the means of a saving change of heart; and these two holy men laboured together in India in extending the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.[d]

25. fear of man, *i.e.* of what he may be able to do to us. snare, entangles us with sharing in their guilt.[a] trust . . Lord, and so fears Him only. safe, set on high; secured and established.

The fear of man (*v.* 25).—From these words we learn—I. Our great danger. 1. For the fear of man is more general than we are aware of; 2. To all who yield to its influence it brings a fatal snare. II. Its proper and only effectual antidote: regard for God Himself. We should trust Him for support, happiness, recompense. Improve:—1. A word of caution; 2. Of encouragement.[b]

True friendship.—Never will Christ fail us, whoever else may; under the shadow of His wing there is both safety and protection. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Without Christ there will be a sense of insecurity, and often the want of sincerity in those around. 'Friends!" said Socrates, "there is no friend." And a friend is a changeable creature, saith another; all in changeable colours, as the peacock, as often changed as moved. Besides, many friends are not more fickle than false: like deep ponds, clear at the top, and all muddy at the bottom. *Fide ergo: ced cui vide.* Try before you trust: and when you have tried your utmost, trust not over far, lest you cry out at length, as Queen Elizabeth did, "In trust I have found treason:" or, as Julius Cæsar, when stabbed by Brutus, among others, "What, thou, my son Brutus!" He was slain in the senate-house, with twenty-three wounds, given mostly by persons whose lives he had preserved.

26, 27. (26) many, *etc.*, as ch. xix. 6. from the Lord, fr. Jehovah, the Supreme Ruler. "It is better to wait for the judgment of the Lord than to run hither and thither, canvassing,

"He that would build lastingly must lay his foundation low. As man fell by pride, he recovers by humility."—*Quoted by Nicholls.*

b "The more God honoureth men, the more they should humble themselves. The more bounty God shows, the more humility He requires."—*Reynolds.*

c *Bewray* is old Eng. to *disclose.* *v.* 23. *Bp. Hall*, v. 270; *J. Bilstone*, 147; *P. Skelton*, ii. 339; *J. Hewlett*, ii. 207.

d *Dr. Cheever.*

a "It easily betrays into a participation in the sinful actions of men."—*O. Zöckler.*

v. 25. *W. May*, 74, 96; *Dr. J. Foster*, i. 215; *J. Hunt*, iv. 51; *W. Enfield*, ii. 215; *Dr. G. Croft*, i. 209; *W. Draper*, 172; *J. F. Durand*, 17.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"There cannot be a more worthy improvement of friendship than in a fervant opposition to the sins of those whom we profess to love." — *Bp. Hall.*

a *Spk. Com.*

b "It is no good sign for him who

would be upright when he can be on friendly terms with the ungodly."-*Von Gerlach.*

"There is a mutual hatred between the good and the bad, old as the devil, deep as hell, strong and universal as death. So long as wickedness exists this mutual antagonism must continue."-*Dav. Thomas, D.D.*

Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22; Jno. xv. 17—19; Ro. viii. 7.

"A faithful friend is better than gold,—a medicine for misery, an only possession."-*Burton.*

e Percy Anec.

bribing, flattering."[a] (27) **abomination,** in each case the word applies to "instinctive antipathy."[b]

English sirdar.—Mr. Forbes, who passed nearly twenty years in India, says that "the character of the English in India is an honour to their country." That his own was is pretty evident from the highly flattering address which the inhabitants of Dhubay presented to him on the morning of his final departure. "Dhubay," says this address, "famed among the cities of the East, was happy when the English sirdar presided in their durbar; his disposition towards the inhabitants was with the best consideration. He afforded shelter to all, whether they were rich or poor; he delivered them from trouble, and restored them to comfort. All castes who looked up to him obtained redress, without distinction, and without price. When he took the poor by the hand he made him rich; under his protection the people were happy, and reposed on the bed of ease. When he superintended the garden, each gardener performed his duty; rills of water flowed to every flower, and all the trees of the garden flourished. So equal was his justice, that the tiger and the kid might drink at the same fountain: and often did he redeem the kid from the tiger's mouth. Under his administration the rich dared not oppress the poor, for his eyes were open to the great and small. In this country we have not known any government so upright as that of the English. Alas! if our protector forsakes us, we shall be disconsolate as a widow; we shall mourn the loss of a father, and weep as for the death of a mother! Allah! in thy mercy, continue him to us."[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1. Agur, a name wholly unknown. Very possibly a symbolic name for Solomon himself. Others suppose him to have been an honoured teacher, and Ithiel and Ucal two of his scholars. **Jakeh,** some render. "son of her who was obeyed (*i.e.* the queen of), Massah."[a] **Ithiel,** means, God with me. **Ucal,** the Mighty One. "Prob. indicating the moral character wh. the author desires, and the kind of persons whom Agur addresses."[b]

A saint's views of himself (*v.* 1).—I shall consider the text—I. As the language of passion—1. In its object: 2. In its operation. II. As the language of piety. Such expressions may fall from the lips of the real saint. 1. From a view of the law under which we live; 2. From a view of that God against whom we have sinned; 3. From a view of the obligation we lie under: 4. From a view of the interests we have at stake. Learn:—Hence we are at no loss to understand—(1) Whence it is that saints are so often dejected in their minds; (2) How far they are from piety who are filled with self-complacent thoughts.[c]

Traveller's fare.—I ask only a pittance for my passage, but not an abundance for my portion in these things: yea, though Thou shouldest give me no kid to make merry with, yet will I not murmur at Thy bounty to prodigals, if Thou wilt say, "Son, all that is laid up is thine, though thou hast little or nothing of what is laid out:" but I will pray. "Turn, Lord, mine eyes from beholding, and my heart from affecting earthly vanities, and fix all my desires upon heaven, that I may look and long for it, in

a "Son of the princes of Massah."—*O. Zöckler.*

The word *jakeh*, signifies reverent, pious, obedient: from the verb *yakah*, to fear.

b Wordsworth.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

Some Christians are like decayed milestones, which stand in the right road, and bear some traces of the proper impression, but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced, that those who pass by can hardly read or know what to make of them.

d W. Spurstowe (1656).

which there is nothing that can offend, but everything that will delight and satisfy to eternity."[d]

2, 3. (2) more brutish, *comp.* confession of Ps. lxxiii. 22. The admission not merely of ignorance, but even of natural incapacity for apprehending Divine things.[a] A strong term to denote his lowly self-estimation. (3) learned wisdom, *i.e.* he did not regard himself as learned, certainly not as having *complete* knowledge. the holy, *i.e.* the Holy One, God. It was in the higher truths he most felt his failure. Lit. *the holies*, plurals poss. put for the "Divine reasons of things, the eternal principles that underlie the universe."

Degraded genius.—It is well known that the celebrated poet, Burns, fell a victim to intemperance. In the beginning of 1796 he had a severe attack of rheumatic fever: a few days after his convalescence, we are told by Lockhart, he was so exceedingly imprudent as to join a festive circle at a tavern dinner, where he remained till about three in the morning. The weather was severe, and he being much intoxicated, took no precaution in thus exposing his debilitated frame to its influence. It has been said that he fell asleep upon the snow on his way home. It is certain that next morning he was sensible of an icy numbness through his joints, that his rheumatism returned with threefold force upon him, and that from that unhappy hour his mind brooded anxiously on the fatal issue. In the following July Robert Burns was committed to the grave.[b]

4. who . . heaven,[a] so as to comprehend the mysteries of creation. A figure for getting above, so as to rule and control all things. bound the waters, with the girdle of the shores.[b] all the ends, so that nothing whatever can be found that is beyond His control. his name, or His adequate and perfect description: a name should be a complete definition. son's name,[c] or has He any human relationships such as we have? The expression may spiritually be referred to Jesus, the Son of God.

Trusting in God.—A military officer being in a dreadful storm, his lady, who was sitting in the cabin near him, and filled with alarm for the safety of the vessel, was so surprised at his composure, that she cried out, "My dear, are you not afraid? How is it possible you can be so calm in such a storm?" He arose from a chair lashed to the deck, and drew his sword. Pointing it to his wife's breast, he said, "Are you not afraid?" She instantly replied, "No—certainly not." "Why?" said the officer. "Because," rejoined his lady, "I know the sword is in the hand of my husband, and he loves me too well to hurt me." "Then," said he, "remember, I know in whom I have believed, and that He holds the winds in His fists, and the waters in the hollow of His hand."

5, 6. (5) pure,[a] Ps. xii. 6, xviii. 30, xix. 8, cxix. 140. It is far better humbly to study the revealed Word than to puzzle over unexplained and insoluble mysteries. shield, *etc.*, Ps. xviii. 30. (6) add . . words,[b] the tendency to add to God's revelation is seen in the crowding traditions of our Lord's time, and the elaborate and various theologies of these times. But reference is here specially intended to vain human speculations. a liar,

[a] "Comp. Mat. xi. 25; 1 Cor. iii. 18, iv. 10. Humility is at once the characteristic and qualification of all true philosophy. "Every believer's experience witnesseth to this, that every one that believes on Jesus Christ, acts that faith as the chief of sinners: every man that seeth himself rightly thinks so of himself, and therein thinks not amiss. God only knows who is truly the greatest sinner, and every humbled sinner will think he is the man."—*Traill.*

[b] *Whitecross.*

[a] Comp. Jno. iii. 13; Is. xl. 12; Ro. x. 6, 7.

[b] "Or, reference may be 'to the upper mass of waters, wrapped in the clouds of heaven as in a capacious garment,' and so kept back from pouring down upon the earth."—*O. Zöckler.*

[c] Re. xix. 12.

v. 4. *Dr. W. Wishart, Theol.* i. 75; *T. Bradbury*, i. 87.

"Nicknames stick to people, and the most ridiculous are the most adhesive."—*Haliburton.*

[a] Heb. *tseruphah*, purified and refined in fire. "Look not for another master, thou hast the oracles of God. No one teaches like them. Ignor-

ance of the Scriptures is the cause of all evils."—*Chrysostom.*
b De. iv. 2, xii. 32; Re. xxii. 18, 19.
v. 6. *M. Sylvester, Morn. Ex.* vi. 427; *J. Billingsley*, 329; *Dr. D. Whitby, Last Thoughts*; *J. N. Scott*, i. 373.
c Dr. Cheever.
a "One staff will help a man on his way, but a bundle of staves would burden and weary him."—*Abp. Leighton.*
b "Lest I assail God's name or attributes as justice, mercy, etc., which the poor are tempted to do."—*Faussel.*
1 Ti. vi. 6, 10; 1 Jno. ii. 16.
v. 7. *Dr. J. Jortin*, ii. 285; *J. Cosens*, ii. 361; *Bp. Brownrig*, i. 395; *Bp. Kidder*, 175; *Bp. Newton*, iii. 149; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iv. 69; *Abp. Hort*, 23; *Dr. T. Laurie*, 182; *R. Fiddes*, iii. 277; *J. Webster*, 81; *Bp. Hoadly*, iii. 793; *Dr. H. Stebbing*, ii. 96; *Dr. J. Heylyn*, ii. 345; *Dr. W. Paley*, i. 250; *W. Draper*, 271.
c G. Brooks.
"To be truly and really independent, is to support ourselves by our own exertions."—*Porter.*
"Richer than doing nothing for a bauble; prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk."—*Shakespeare.*
d Dr. Guthrie.

a Ps. x. 7.
"Make not a slave to accuse his master." So rend. *Bertheau, Hitzig*, etc.
"In a word, ingratitude is too base to return a

one making representations and explanations which are proved to be false and unworthy.

Who are the cowards?—The captain of a ship says, "I am in the habit of reading the Scriptures to the crew. I have suffered much lately at sea; having been dismasted, and had all my boats washed away, a little to the westward of Cape Clear. I then had an opportunity of seeing who was who: and I found the most unprincipled men the most useless and the greatest cowards in this awful gale, and the Bible men altogether the reverse, most useful and courageous."[c]

7—9. (7) **deny**, or withhold not from me. **before I die**, or, as long as I live. (8) **vanity**, *etc.*, with special reference to vain speculations and lying assumptions of special knowledge. He wants the spirit of contentment, that he may be kept within the limits of revelation. **poverty**, *etc.*,[a] a wise limitation of his circumstances would be in harmony with the wise limitation of his thinking. **convenient**, or a necessary, appointed portion. Comp. our Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." (9) **deny thee**, in self-satisfaction and luxurious enjoyment. **take**, *i.e.* violently take.[b]

The prayer of Agur (*vv.* 7—9).—I. It was short—long and short prayers. II. It was comprehensive—two petitions—for his soul grace, for his body suitable food. III. It was spiritual—against excessive wealth and pinching poverty. IV. It was wise—proceeding from an accurate and judicious survey of the moral effects produced by the different conditions of human life. The rich and the poor have their peculiar temptations. V. It was believing. It breathes a fine spirit of dependence upon God. VI. It was moderate—the golden mean.[c]

Influence of poverty.—The dangerous and deadly influence of great poverty I may illustrate by a scene which I have not forgotten, nor can forget. Alone in the garret of a dilapidated house, within a wretched room, stretched on a pallet of straw, covered only by some scanty, filthy rags, with no fire in the empty chimney, and the winter wind blowing in cold and fitful gusts through the broken, battered window, an old woman lay, feeble, wasted, grey. She had passed the eleventh hour; the hand was creeping on to the twelfth. Had she been called? It was important to turn to the best account the few remaining sands of life: so I spoke to her of her soul, and told her of a Saviour—urging her to prepare for that other world on whose awful border her spirit was hovering. She looked; she stared; and, raising herself on her elbow, with chattering teeth and ravenous look exclaimed, "I am cold and hungry." Promising help, I at the same time warned her that there was something worse than cold and hunger. Whereupon stretching out a naked and skinny arm, with an answer which, if it did not satisfy the reason, touched the feelings, she said, "If you were as cold and as hungry as I am, you could think of nothing else."[d]

10. **accuse**, *Heb.* "Hurt not with thy tongue." Slander not.[a] **curse thee**, turn on thee, and tell of thy wrong doings. Masters and mistresses should be very careful of listening to reports about their servants: and men should take heed and not spoil the harmony of family life and social relations.

Treatment of servants.—I am quite sure that no one would

have to complain of servants if they would both bear in mind the sensitiveness which is already produced by the improved education of the class from which they are taken, and, while they carefully avoid the peremptory tone of command which is too common, trust them more. Many a well-intentioned lady, moreover, keeps up a spirit of small but chronic resentment in her household by supervision in those matters which lie outside the covenant between mistress and servant. Servants, for example, should never be compelled to do their shopping and see their friends on the sly. Let them have the privilege of entertaining some of their acquaintances, and going out to do their own inevitable business. Arrange, if possible, for your servants to have a party of their own friends some day when you are away from home yourself. When you are absent for a time, bring back some little present; not an offensively good book, but such a knick-knack as is decorative rather than severely useful. Do not be too censorious about bonnets and hoops. Rather give your maid some article of dress which is dainty, and yet becoming, and thus win her confidence, by assuming the righteousness of a certain amount of personal self-respect. Meet the inevitable weaknesses of youth, good looks and high spirits half-way, and let your own good taste and better cultivation lead them aright. Do not sniff at them, and send them off at a tangent, thus possibly driving them into defiant and outrageous extremes. Above all, be courteous. Do not claim as a prerogative of gentility to speak sharply to those who are required to answer you with respect. It seems to me that servants are sometimes expected to be the most gentle in the household, and to keep rules of politeness which their betters are exempted from observing. If you treat your equal with courtesy, who is privileged to resent an impertinence, how much more cautious should you be in your tone towards those from whom you demand a repectful demeanour.[b]

11—14. (11) generation, or class of people.[a] curseth .. mother, are abusive to their parents. (12) pure, *etc.*, and so are hypocrites, such as the Pharisee who boasted of his goodness in his prayer.[b] "It is of the essence of this temper that its hypocrisy is *unconscious*.[c] (13) lofty, *etc.*, proud. The attitude characteristic of the proud is vigorously sketched. (14) teeth, *etc.*, the cruel. jaw teeth, or eye-teeth; those wh. in the beasts are used for seizing and tearing.

The self-deceiver exposed (*v.* 12).—Among the generation of self-deceivers we must number—I. The decent formalist: he is pure in his own eyes, he is not washed from his filthiness. II. The almost Christian: he goes much farther than the formalist, but, like him, he deceiveth his own soul. III. The inconsistent professor: who more confident of the goodness of his state than he who professes to believe in Christ, but who more open to self-deception? Address—1. Those who, though pure in their own eyes, are not washed; 2. Those who, though not pure in their own eyes, are really washed from their filthiness.[d]

The ungrateful son.—Some years ago an Irish gentleman, who was an extensive contractor on our public works, was reduced to poverty by the profligacy and dishonesty of an ungrateful son. The old man lost his wife; and, to add to his calamity, his health failed, and to fill up the cup of his sorrow he lost his

kindness, and too proud to regard it; much like the tops of mountains, barren, indeed, but yet lofty; they produce nothing, they feed nobody, they clothe nobody, yet are high and stately, and look down upon all the world about them." — *Dr. South.*

"Ingratitude is a nail which, driven into the tree of courtesy, causes it to wither: it is a broken channel, by which the foundations of the affections are undermined; and a lump of soot, which, falling into the dish of friendship, destroys its scent and flavour." — *Basil.*

b Chambers.

a Young men of that black-character commonly herd together, and irritate one another against their parents.

b Lu. xviii. 11.

c Of some sins we are not sensible, because they are habitual, wh. very circumstance is an aggravation of their guilt.

v. 12. *R. Erskine*, i. 325; *Dr. J. Young*, i. 169; *J. Milner*, ii. 103; *D. Moore*, 1.

v. 13. *J. Wallis*, 121.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Early impressions are not easily erased; the

virgin wax is faithful to the signet, and subsequent impressions seem rather to indent the former ones than to eradicate them."—*Colton.*

"'Tis but instruction, all! Our parent's hand writes on our heart the first faint characters, which time, retracing, deepens into strength, that nothing can efface but death or Heaven."—*Aaron Hill.*

a Galuka, in the Indian, is the name of the bloodsucker.

b Spk. Com.

c Ref. would be either to the unnatural death of such unnatural children, or to the fact that they should lie unburied, men being unwilling to give them the respect shown in decent burial.

Le. xx. 9; Pr. xx. 20.

v. 15. *Bp. Abernethy*, 377; *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 145—155.

"If I had no other reason and motive for being religious, I would earnestly strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother, that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy."—*Hooker.*

Bochart asserts that the "two daughters" signify Hades and the grave, which are never satisfied.

d R. T. S.

sight. Thus poor, friendless, blind, and forsaken, he found an asylum in the Franklin county almshouse, Pennsylvania. While an inmate of this refuge for the afflicted, his wicked and ungrateful son travelled that way; he was informed of his father's situation, and that his parent wished to see him; and although he passed within two hundred yards of the almshouse, he refused to stop and see the kind father he had ruined. Now mark the result. The very day he passed the almshouse on his way to Gettysburg, in an open carriage, he was overtaken by a storm, and took a severe cold that resulted in the destruction of his eyes. He lay in Gettysburg in a critical situation until his funds were exhausted, and those who had him in charge took him to the Franklin county almshouse. The very day he was brought in, his father, having died the day before, was carried out. He was put in the same room, and occupied the same bed, and, in a short time, followed his neglected and heartbroken father to the judgment-seat of Christ.

15—17. (15) **horseleech**, Heb. *alûkâh.*[a] The leech fastens with the utmost tenacity on the mouths of cattle or legs of travellers, and is used as an emblem of the eager desire that nothing can satisfy. The precise creature meant by Agur cannot be determined. **two daughters**, "that wh. is characteristic of the creature, its voracious appetite, is here represented as its daughters."[b] **enough**, Heb. *wealth.* (16) **filled with water**, such earth will take any quantity of rain. (17) **eye**, chief organ for expressing mockery and contempt. **ravens**, wh. are still found in the ravines and valleys of Syria.[c]

Note on horseleech.—The Heb. *alûkâh* doubtless signifies some species of leech, a creature that for ages has been an emblem of rapacity and cruelty. Both the British horseleech (*Hæmopsis sanguisuga*) and the medical leech (*Sanguisuga medicinalis*) abound in Syria. Thus of the lake Phiala (S.E. of Banias = Paneas Cæsarea) Robinson says, "it supplies the whole country with leeches: which are gathered by men wading in and letting the leeches fasten themselves upon their legs." The Heb. *alûkâh* is from a root = to adhere, and to this day the Arabs call the *Limnatis Nilotica* "alak."—*Dr. Adam Clarke.*—The late Dr. Adam Clarke, when but a little boy, one day disobeyed his mother, and the disobedience was accompanied with some look or gesture that indicated an undervaluing of her authority. This was a high affront: she immediately took up the Bible, and opened on these words (Prov. xxx. 17), which she read and commented on in a most solemn manner: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The poor culprit was cut to the heart, believing the words had been sent immediately from heaven: he went out into the fields with a troubled spirit, and was musing on this terrible denunciation of Divine displeasure, when the hoarse croak of a raven sounded to his conscience an alarm more dreadful than the cry of fire at midnight! He looked up, and soon perceived this most ominous bird, and actually supposing it to be the raven of which the text spoke, coming to pick out his eyes, he clapped his hands on them, and with the utmost speed and trepidation ran towards the house, as fast as his alarm and perturbation would admit, that he might escape the impending vengeance![d]

18—20. (18) too wonderful, beyond my tracing so as fully to explain. way, or path: in each of the things here mentioned no such trace is left as may enable the course taken to be detected. (19) midst, or heart. (20) done no wickedness, bec. none can point out the signs of the wrong.[a]

The four teachers (*vv.* 18, 19).—Many things became to Agur the inlets of wise reflection. I. An eagle in the air; that sublime thing, overcoming, walking, on the wings of the wind, sailing through the thunderstorm, living where the lightnings play, able to gaze on the sun. II. A serpent: that long, cruel creature, its coils, its rapid spring, its strange interlocking of vertebræ. III. Man imitating nature; the way of a ship, that dead yet living bird of art and science; art has nothing more graceful, more amazingly buoyant and natural. IV. More wonderful than all other, relation of hearts. How two people who never saw each other, meet, and how a lifelong relationship rises, so that if one heart is torn from the other the survivor pines and almost dies.[b]—*The way of the eagle.*—I. It is heavy, and yet it flies. II. The air resists it, and yet it flies. III. The resistance helps it, and therefore it flies. IV. There are extraordinary and Divine contrivances to aid it, and therefore it flies.[c]

The flight of the eagle.—Great as are the distances which these birds sometimes fly, it becomes comprehensible when we know that an eagle, as he sweeps freely through the air, traverses a space of sixty feet in a second of time. To be able thus rapidly to move along is undoubtedly an attribute of power: but there is something far more imposing, far more majestic, in that calm onward motion, when, with wings outspread and quite still, the mighty bird floats buoyantly in the atmosphere, upheld and borne along by the act of mere volition. The length of time he can thus remain suspended without a single beat of his broad, shadowy pinions, is to me still an inexplicable fact. He will sail forward in a perfectly horizontal direction for a distance of more than a mile, without the slightest quiver of a feather giving sign that the wings are moved. Not less extraordinary is the power the bird possesses of arresting himself instantaneously at a certain spot and dropping through the air with folded wings from a height of three or four thousand feet. When circling so high up that he shows but as a dot, he will suddenly close both wings, and, falling like an aërolite, pass through the intervening space in a few seconds of time. With a burst his broad pinions are again unfolded, his downward progress is arrested, and he sweeps away horizontally, smoothly, and without effort. He has been seen to do this when carrying a sheep of twenty pounds' weight in his talons; and from so giddy a height that both the eagle and his booty were not larger than a sparrow. It was directly over a wall of rock in which the eyrie was built; and while the speck in the clouds was being examined, and doubts entertained as to the possibility of its being the eagle, down he came headlong, every instant increasing in size, when, in passing the precipice, out flew his mighty wings, the sheep was flung into the nest, and on the magnificent creature moved, calmly and unflurried, as a barque sails gently down the stream of a river.

21—23. (21) cannot bear, they are things intolerable; "by them the state of nations and the world is turned upside down." (22) reigneth, becomes masterful. fool[a] . . meat, or those

a "The soul wh. has revolted from the heavenly Bridegroom thinks that it can wash away its pollution by its own hands, and it justifies itself in its own eyes."—*Wordsworth.*

b *E. Paxton Hood.*

c *Ibid.*

"Beasts, birds, and insects, even to the minutest and meanest of their kind, act with the unerring providence of instinct; man, the while, who possesses a higher faculty, abuses it, and therefore goes blundering on. They, by their unconscious and unhesitating obedience to the laws of nature, fulfil the end of their existence; he, in wilful neglect of the laws of God, loses sight of the end of his."—*Southey.*

"Instinct is that power of volition or impulse produced by the peculiar nature of an animal, which prompts it to do certain things independent of all instruction or experience and without deliberation, where such act is immediately connected with its own individual preservation, or with that of its kind."—*Maunder.*

a A silly, rude, boisterous viciousman.

who are worthless and yet are prospered and honoured. (23) odious, unlovable: one worthy of hate.[b] One who when married triumphs insolently over others. heir, *etc.*, takes her place as a wife.[c]

Evils attendant on servants.—

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and, when he's old, cashier'd;—
Whip me such honest knaves: others there are,
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them, and, when they have lined their coats,
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul:
And such a one do I profess myself.[d]

24—28. (24) wise, specially here the wonderful *instinct* of the creatures is referred to. Wise here means "quick of wit." (25) ants, ch. vi. 6—8. Their collective and organised action is very striking. prepare, their foresight is specially noticed. This is only true of some kinds of ants. (26) conies,[a] either field-mice or rabbits. "Jerboas." (27) by bands, in masses, under some kind of organisation.[b] (28) spider . . hands, poss. a kind of lizard is meant, one that secretes a venomous exudation fr. the feet, and so catches spiders, flies, etc.

Spiritual diligence a source of happiness (*vv.* 24—28).—Let us take a general view of the whole passage, and notice the great moral truths which it teaches. I. That we ought to act according to the whole of our nature,—they do so. II. That we ought to secure all the happiness of which our nature is susceptible,—they do so. 1. God has provided happiness for every nature, and for every nature its own happiness; 2. Man's happiness is to be obtained in connection with its own activity: 3. We ought not to be satisfied without obtaining all the happiness which the Divine mercy has provided for us.[c]—*The spider's example* (*v.* 28).—I. What things are there about a spider which it is worth our while to imitate? 1. Industry; 2. Perseverance. II. What does the spider gain by its industry and perseverance? An honourable place and an honest living. III. What may we gain by industry and perseverance in the use of the means in our power? We may gain a more honourable place and a better life than that of the spider, and we may gain these for others as well as ourselves.[d]

Prehensory organs of the spider.—Spiders are gifted with the faculty of walking against gravity, even upon glass, and in a prone position. This is not effected by producing atmospheric pressure by the adhesion of suckers, but by a brush, formed of slender bristles, fringed on each side with exceeding fine hairs, gradually diminishing in length as they approach its extremity, where they occur in such profusion as to form a thick brush on its interior surface. This is one of the modes by which they take hold with their hands, and thus they ascend walls, and set their snares in the palace as well as the cottage. Whoever

b An ill-natured, cross-grained woman.

c Or persuades her mistress to leave her her money.

r. 23. *Dr. T. Hunt, Obs.* 158.

Provs.—"The lion had need of the mouse."—*English.*—"Soon or late, the strong needs the help of the weak."—*French.*—"Every ten years, one man has need of another."—*Italian.*

d Shakespeare.

a Le. xi. 5; Ps. civ. 18.

b Is. xxxiii. 4.

c Caleb Morris.

d Dr. Richard Newton.

"Man's instincts are elevated and ennobled by the moral ends and purposes of his being. He is not destined to be the slave of blind impulses, a vessel purposeless, unmeant. He is constituted by his moral and intelligent will to be the first freed being, the masterwork and the end of nature; but this freedom and high office can only co-exist with fealty and devotion to the service of truth and virtue."—*Matthew Greene.*

e Kirby.

"Vain man! to be so fond of breathing long, and spinning out a thread of misery. The longer life, the greater choice of evil."—*Young.*

examines the under side of the last joint or digit of the foot of this animal with a common pocket lens, will see that it is clothed with a very thick brush, the hairs of which, under a more powerful magnifier, appear somewhat hooked at the apex; in some species this brush is divided longitudinally, so as to form two.[c]

29—31. (29) go well, in moving are majestic or comely: have a stately movement. (30) lion, *comp.* his movement with that of tiger. (31) greyhound, poss. should be a *horse*. Lit. "one with loins girded;" with allusion to stately trappings of the war-horse. king, in his state robes.

Moffat and the lion.—"At Sitlagole River," says Mr. Moffat, in his *Missionary Labours and Scenes*, "about a hundred and sixty miles from the Kuruman, we halted in the afternoon, and allowed our oxen to graze on a rising bank opposite our waggons, and somewhat farther than a gunshot from them. Having but just halted, and not having loosened a gun, we were taken by surprise by two lions rushing out from a neighbouring thicket. The oldest one, of enormous size, approached within ten yards of the oxen, and bounding on one of my best, killed him in a moment, by sending his great teeth through the vertebræ of the neck. The younger lion couched at the distance, while the elder licked his prey, turning his head occasionally towards the other oxen, which had caught his scent and scampered off: then, with his forefeet upon the carcase, he looked and roared at us, who were all in a scuffle to loosen our guns and attack his majesty. Two of our number, more eager to frighten than to kill, discharged their muskets: and probably a ball whistling past his ear induced him to retire to the thicket whence he had come, leaving us in quiet possession of the meat. At Meritsane, the bed of another dry river, we had a serenade of desert music, composed of the treble, counter, and bass voices of jackals, hyenas, and lions."

32, 33. (32) lay . . mouth, the sign of humiliation.[a] (33) forcing, or pressing.[b]

Count Cavour and Garibaldi.—Bixio rose to speak in the name of concord and Italy. He said he was Italian above all things. He had faith in Garibaldi; but he also trusted the patriotism of Count Cavour. "Gentlemen, I have a beloved family at home. Gentlemen, I would willingly give that family and my own self to be able to join the hands of these two great men,—bring them to forget and forgive. Parties, gentlemen, are ruining us: they disgrace us; we must forget and forgive." This blunt but hearty eloquence went home to every man's soul. After Bixio's speech, another outbreak would have been impossible.[c]

Some years since, several persons saw a young man approach the river Seine, in Paris, with the intention of drowning his dog. Having rowed into the stream, he threw the dog into the water. The poor creature attempted to climb up the side of the boat, but his cruel master always pushed him back with the oars. In doing this, he himself fell into the water, and would certainly have been drowned, had not his faithful dog instantly laid hold of him, and kept him above water till assistance arrived, when his life was saved.

"Live as long as you may, the first twenty years are the longest half of your life."
—*Southey.*

a Comp. Job xxi. 5, xxix. 9, xl. 4.

b "The Oriental mode of churning by squeezing and wringing a leathern bag or bottle that contains the milk, makes more apparent and vivid the meaning of this comparison."
—*Thomson.*

c *The Times.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) Lemuel,[a] prob. a name of King Solomon. (2) what, my son? the language of emphasis. son . . vows, one dedicated to God. (3) strength, bodily vigour, wh. is soon wasted by the indulgences of vice. destroyeth, enervates: plucks away the physical and the mental energy.

a Lemuel means *to God*, or more fully, *dedicated to God*.
"The ways of licentiousness are here intended,

wh. ruin physically and morally kings and princes who give themselves up to them." — *O. Zöckler.*

b R. Tuck, B.A.

a "Stimulants enfeeble reason and pervert the heart, and do not suit rulers, who need clear and steady minds, and well-governed affections."—*Fawsset.*

b Ps. civ. 15.

c Whitecross.

Men's lives should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or, like the summer, aglow with promise; and, like the autumn, rich with the golden sheaves, where good works and deeds have ripened on the field.

a Ruined by their oppressors.

"To send the injured unredress'd away, how great soe'er the offender, and the wrong'd howe'er obscure, is wicked, weak, and vile, — degrades, defiles, and should dethrone a king." —*Smollet.*

The greatest pleasure of life is love; the greatest treasure contentment; the greatest possession health; the greatest ease sleep; and the best medicine a true friend.

Didactic poetry.—Didactic or gnomic poetry is that which delivers moral precepts in elegant and pointed verses, often illustrated by a comparison expressed or implied, similar to the moral sentences and adages of ancient sages. The principal specimens are the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. This kind of poetry represents the nearest approach of the people to anything like philosophy. It is the form in which the poet communicates knowledge to others, and it requires for its development a time of peace and tranquillity, such as we find in the age of Solomon.[b]

4—7. (4) strong drink, reference is made here to drinking *habits*, wh. loosen the self-restraint, and destroy the faculty of clear judgment.[a] "Strong drink was distilled from barley, or honey, or dates." (5) pervert, alter, so as to injure the poor suppliant. (6) heavy hearts, *lit.* bitter of soul. The medicinal use of such stimulants seems to have been recognised. "It was a Jewish custom to give a cup of wine to mourners."[b]

Fidelity to principle.—An officer in the American army, who had some business to transact with General Washington, was invited to dine with him. Just before dinner was concluded, Washington called him by name, and requested him to drink a glass of wine with him. "You will have the goodness to excuse me, General," was the reply, "as I have made it a rule not to take wine." The eyes of a numerous company, of both sexes, were instantly turned upon the young officer, and expressions of disapprobation appeared on all sides. Washington, observing the feelings of his company, thus addressed them:—"Gentlemen, Mr. —— is right. I do not wish any of my guests to partake of anything against their inclination, and I certainly do not wish them to violate any established principle in their social intercourse with me. I honour Mr. —— for his frankness, for his consistency in thus adhering to an established rule which can never do him harm, and for the adoption of which, I have no doubt, he has good and sufficient reasons."[c]

8, 9. (8) appointed, *etc.*,[a] *lit.* children of bereavement: those destined to, or in danger of, the loss of their goods. It is king's work to defend and plead for such. Or ref. may be to helpless, orphaned children. (9) judge righteously, Le. xix. 15; De. i. 16.

A judge above resentment.—In the latter half of the last century the lord justice clerk of Scotland, who had a fine avenue of trees leading to his country house, though not growing on ground which he could call his own, happened to displease the proprietor, who caused all the trees to be cut down. The damage was irreparable, but his lordship, who was of a mild and amiable disposition, submitted to it in silence. Two or three years afterwards, it happened that this laird's whole estate was put in jeopardy by the next heir-at-law producing a prior will, which, though it had long lain dormant, appeared so plain and genuine, that the laird nearly gave up his right; and abandoned all hope, when he found it must be decided by the man he had so deeply injured. The strict integrity of the judge was, however, a sufficient guarantee that justice would be impartially administered. The judge, when the cause came before him, sifted it with indefatigable industry and zeal for public justice, when he discovered the will was a forgery; and thus, contrary to all expectation, the

laird gained his cause. He then waited on the judge with shame and confusion, and acknowledged that he would never have recovered the suit had it not been for his lordship, as his own counsel had given it up. "You have nothing to thank me for," said the judge, "but my having taken due pains to do you justice. This was a duty I owed to myself, and I should have been unworthy of the place I occupy if I suffered any injury done to myself to influence me in the administration of justice." [b]

10–12. (10) **virtuous,**[a] not merely chaste, but including moral strength, uprightness, cultured and noble character, fitness for domestic duties, etc. **her price,** or value. **rubies,** better, *pearls*. (11) **safely trust,** this is unusual; husbands in the E. generally trust locks and keys.[b] **need of spoil,**[c] better, no lack of gain. The results of honest labour being wisely and well expended at home, no need arises for unlawful schemes for raising money. (12) **do him good,** in every sense, moral and intellectual good, as well as temporal. She fears to do anything that may turn to his prejudice.

Schools of industry (*v.* 10).—The description here given of a queen is but ill suited to the refinements of the present age. Consider it with a view to the lower classes. I. The character of a virtuous woman. She is described by—1. Her industry; 2. Her prudence; 3. Her piety. II. It is not easy to estimate the worth of such a character, for she is—1. An ornament to her sex; 2. A blessing to her family; 3. A comfort to all around her. III. The tendency of this institution to increase their number. 1. It is rare we find among the poor a combination of the qualities insisted upon; 2. A school of industry a boon to the rising race. IV. Consider some objections. 1. Among the rich—some think it better that the poor should be kept in ignorance, others that persons may be wanted for agricultural work; 2. Among the poor—they are unwilling to forego the immediate earnings of their children.[d]

Occupation.—People may tell you of your being unfit for some peculiar occupations in life; but heed them not. Whatever employ you follow with perseverance and assiduity will be found fit for you: it will be your support in youth, and your comfort in age. In learning the useful part of any profession, very moderate abilities will suffice—great abilities are generally injurious to the possessors. Life has been compared to a race; but the allusion still improves by observing that the most swift are ever the most apt to stray from the course.[e]

13, 14. (13) **wool and flax,** "in Sidon, at this day, a majority of the women are thus working in raw silk and cotton, instead of wool and flax. The produce is sold to merchants who come from afar."[a] **with her hands,**[b] so we are taught that handicraft is not unworthy of princesses. "The most distinguished queens of the ancient time excelled in the art of spinning."[c] (14) **food from afar,** either by selling to foreign merchants, or by carefully finding out the best markets, though they may be distant ones. Comp. *v.* 24.

The royal merchant (*v.* 14).—I. The merchant is a profitable ship, to teach a wife in all things to endeavour her husband's profit. II. The merchant is a painful ship, and she must be a painful wife. III. He is the merchant, she the ship, she must

"The injustice of men subserves the justice of God, and often His mercy."—*Madame Swetchine.*

b Percy Anec.

a Pr. xii. 4.

b "The husband, in nine cases out of every ten, does not feel very confident that 'she will do him good and not evil,' and therefore he sets a jealous watch over her, and places every valuable article under lock and key. This is mainly owing to two things, bad education and want of love."—*Thomson.*

c "A strong expression to describe the rich profit to which the co-operation of the efficient wife helps her husband's activity in his occupation."—*O. Zöckler.*

1 Cor. vii. 34.

v. 10. *J. Colby, Wedding Ser.* 51.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

e Goldsmith.

a Thomson.

b Lit. "And laboureth with her hand's pleasure," or, "and laboureth in the business of her hands."

c Bushnell.

It is reported of Augustus himself, at the height of the Roman splendour, that he wore a robe

wh. was made for him by Livia, his wife.

conclude she was made for him. IV. She is like a merchant's ship, that is, a friendly fellow and peaceable companion, not a man-of-war to him.[d]

Flax.—Cotton, though it appears to have been known to the Egyptians, and is largely cultivated by the modern inhabitants of Palestine, does not seem to have been used by the Hebrews of Old Testament times. Flax was extensively grown both in Egypt and Palestine, and is one of the most ancient articles of manufacture recorded in sacred history. We learn from Josh. ii. 6 that the stalks of flax were laid upon the housetops to dry; they were then peeled or split into fibres, and the tow separated from them by a comb.

vv. 10–28. *Bellamy, Fam. Preach.* ii. 395.

15—17. (15) **riseth . . night**, in the E. the industrious are usually very early risers. In hot countries early morning is the best time for work. **meat**, or rations of food. **portion**, or allotment of work. If the wife had to start them forth into the fields, she would need to arrange the work and food for each. Doing this early prevented the servants wasting their time. (16) **buyeth it**, by the produce of her own labour she even adds to the property of the family. **vineyard**, she plants vines in this field she buys.[a] (17) **girdeth**, *etc.*, the girdle being an important article of dress, and especially tightened in preparation for work.

d R. Wilkinson. Preached before the king's majesty at the nuptials of an honourable lord and his lady.

An old proverb verified (*vv.* 15—17).—"Early to bed," etc. We have here—I. An early riser. 1. This good for body and mind; 2. A corrective of lazy and luxurious habits; 3. House in order for early meals, work, and worship. II. A careful housewife. If the mistress rises late waste comes of servants helping themselves, or they imitate her example of idleness. III. She is a thoughtful bargainer—considers before she buys. IV. She enjoys good health, in great measure the result of good habits and thoughtfulness, as she promotes early rising, cleanliness, industry, and economy.

Industry.—Industry doth not consist merely in action, for that is incessant in all persons; our mind being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither; but the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry.[b]

a "She does this with what she can spare out of the gains of her own housewifery. Men should not lay out anything upon superfluities, till, by the blessing of God upon their industry, they have got beforehand, and can afford it: and then the fruit of the vineyard is likely to be doubly sweet, when it is the fruit of honest industry."—*Mat. Henry.*

vv. 10—31. *Dr. J. Fordyce*, i. 207.

"... have observed among all nations that the women ornament themselves more than the men."—*Ledyard.*

b Dr. Barrow.

18—20. (18) **perceiveth**, tastes, discerns, finds out that it is good thus to labour and sell the produce of her labour, and so finds new incentives. **candle . . night**, Thompson says that in the E. the very poorest people even keep a light burning all through the night, in fear of night-dangers.[a] (19) **distaff**, referred to in *v.* 13.[b] Lit. the whorl, or wheel. (20) **stretcheth . . hand**, her open palm. Her hollow or bent hand, holding some gift.[c]

a The idea of this *v.* may be that, estimating the value of her merchandise, she takes care to watch over it well during the darkness of the night.

b "The distaff was held in one hand, or under one arm, and the spindle, hanging by the thread, was occasionally

My lady bountiful (*v.* 20).—I. She has a sympathising heart—thinks of the poor. II. She has discriminating eyes—distinguishing between the deserving poor and others. III. She has liberal hands. IV. She has a self-denying benevolence; it is for this, in part, that she is industrious, etc.

An American lady.—The late Rev. Mr. Rodgers, of America,

often related anecdotes concerning the unexpected rep l s and the agreeable surprises which occurred in the course of the excursions he made to solicit aid to charitable objects. One of the latter class may serve as a specimen. Mr. Rodgers, attended by an officer of the church, called one morning at the house of an excellent woman, a widow, who had recently lost by death a pious and beloved daughter. As her circumstances were narrow, little was expected from her. Indeed they called upon her chiefly to testify their respect, and to avoid the imputation of either forgetting her person or despising her mite. To their great surprise, however, when their errand was made known, she presented to them, with much promptness and cordiality, a sum which, for her, was very large—so large, indeed, that they felt and expressed some scruples about accepting it. She put an end to the difficulty by saying, with much decision, "You must take it all: I had laid it up as a portion for my daughter; and I am determined that He who has my daughter shall have her portion too."[d]

hit and twirle by the other. The weaving process was equally rude and simple."—*Bushnell.*

c "The industry is not selfish, but bears the fruit of an open-handed charity." — *Spk. Com.*

d *R. T. S.*

"If thou wouldst please the ladies, thou must endeavour to make them pleased with themselves."—*Fuller.*

21—23. (21) **snow**, the indication **of cold** weather, for wh. clothing should be adapted. **scarlet**, the warm colour, put here for warm clothing. (22) **silk**,[a] better, *fine linen*, the *byssus* of Egypt. (23) **known**, *i.e.* observed, as a singularly well-cared-for man. "The husband of such a wife is distinguished among his compeers by a costume clean, whole, and handsome, and a countenance contented and happy."[b]

Prudence and taste (*vv.* 21, 22).—I. She anticipates the changing seasons by appropriate preparations, provides seasonable clothing. II. She affects the beautiful as well as the useful; the beautiful and the good are united in her thoughts and toils. III. She is known through her husband, by his happy deportment, appearance, and unruffled temper: his wisdom receives strength from her. IV. Such a woman will be wise in her choice of a husband. Note:—This may be applied to the Church and Christ, "The bride, the Lamb's wife."

Silk for one year's spinning.—The city of Lyons consumes annually two million pounds of spun silk. Four cocoons and a fraction are necessary to produce a gramme (the five-hundredth part of a pound); consequently, the consumption of Lyons alone requires 4,200,000,000 cocoons: the length of silk thread in each being about 500 metres, the total is equal to 2,100,000 millions of metres; which is fourteen times the distance of the earth from the sun, or 5,494 times that of the moon from the earth. That length would encircle the globe at the equator 52,505 times, or reach 200,000 times round the moon.

a "Scarlet, purple, tapestry, and embroidery are still the favourite colours and patterns of Oriental taste."—*Thomson.*

b "'Tis meet for thee to sit among the princes, and hold thy council, with thy body clad in raiment fair and clean."—*Homer.*

Pr. xii. 4.

"Of women it has always been known that no censure wounds so deeply, or that they resent so long, as speaking against their persons or their dress."—*Dr. Johnson.*

24—26. (24) **fine linen**, the word used here indicates not the material, but the made-up garments.[a] Lit. *a wide robe.* **merchant**, *lit.* Canaanite, or the Phœnician merchant. (25) **rejoice**, *etc.*, some render. *She laugheth at the future*, in reliance on her stores and her skill. The evil day finds her provided for. (26) **openeth . . wisdom**, her conversation is sensible. **law of kindness**,[b] she rules, but with due consideration and tenderness. "She was too rich in love for envies, too noble for jealousies, too confiding for suspicions, too truthful for falsehood, too good for scandal."

A good wife's future joy (*v.* 25).—I. The provision for this joy:

a Isa. iii. 23.

b "Her wisdom and kindness together put a commanding power into all she says; they command respect; they command compliance." — *Mat. Henry.*

1 Ti. ii. 8—10; 1 Pe. iii. 3, 4.

vv. 26, 27. *W. Gahan*, 263.
Proverbs. — "There are only two good women in the world: one of them is dead, and the other is not to be found. One hair of a woman draws more than a bell-rope." — *German.* "A woman's counsel is no great thing; but he who does not take it is a fool. Women, wind, and fortune soon change."— *Spanish.* "Women are wise offhand, and fools on reflection. Whatever a woman wills she can." — *Italian.* "What a woman wills, God wills." —*French.* "A woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust."--*Chinese.* c *Dr. Todd.*

v. 28. *M. Henry, Misc. Wks.*
vv. 28–31. *J. B. Massillon*, xiv. 231.
v. 29. *W. Crompton, Wed. Sers.* 225; *Abbe Cambaceres*, iii. 393.
a *J. Durrant.* "A lamp is lit in woman's eye, that souls else lost on earth remember angels by."--*N. P. Willis.* "A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, muddy, ill-seeming, and bereft of beauty." —*Shakespeare.* Rev. A. Atwood, of Philadelphia, said that woman's qualities shone with a glorious brightness in the hour of mankind's affliction and sickness. She is the nurse of the world.

her character, habits. II. The subject of this joy: her home, children, husband, prosperity. III. The nature of it: her children, etc. Verse 28. The joy of rest and reward in advanced life, the favour of God, joy in anticipation of the future life.—*A good woman's tongue* (*v.* 26).—It is marked by—I. Wisdom: she does not prate of things beyond her sphere; has good advice for her daughter and her husband. II. Kindness: she is no scold, or loud-voiced woman; her words are full of tenderness, love, truth, cheerful piety.

The memory of a praying mother cherished.—A short time since, just at sunset on a summer's day, I went to the grave of a dear sister of mine. Her two little boys went with me. When we had arrived there, I saw four little rose bushes standing, two at the head and two at the foot of the grave, bending over as if to meet and hang over the grave. "That is her grave,—our mother's grave," said one of the boys. "And those rose bushes?" said I, as the tears started in my eyes. "Those," said the eldest, "brother, and I, and father set soon after she was laid there. Those two at the head she planted in the garden herself, and we took them up and set them there, and call them 'Mother's bushes.'" "And what do you remember about your dear mother, my boys?" "Oh, everything." "What in particular?" "Oh, this, uncle, that there never was a day since I can remember that she did not take us to her closet and pray with us, unless she was sick on the bed." Never did that sister seem so dear to me as at that moment, and never did my heart feel so full a hope in the words which were engraved on the tombstone,—

"No mortal woes
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,
While angels watch her soft repose."

27—29. (27) **bread of idleness,** leaving others to do her duty. (28) **blessed,** bec. of her earnest labours on their behalf, and because of her gracious influence upon them. (29) **thou,** the ideal person described. Or this may be the exclamation of the grateful, trustful husband.

A word to mothers (*v.* 28).—Direct the attention of mothers to—I. The duties of the maternal relation. II. Maternal advantages. III. The encouragement which mothers have to believe that their children will rise up to call them blessed.a

Good daughters.—In the year 1773, Peter Burrell, Esq., of Beckenham, in Kent, whose health was rapidly declining, was advised by his physicians to go to Spa for the recovery of his health. His daughters feared that those who had only motives entirely mercenary would not pay him that attention which he might expect from those who, from duty and affection united, would feel the greatest pleasure in ministering to his ease and comfort; they, therefore, resolved to accompany him. They proved that it was not a spirit of dissipation and gaiety that led them to Spa, for they were not to be seen in any of the gay and fashionable circles; they were never out of their father's company, and never stirred from home, except to attend him, either to take the air or drink the waters; in a word, they lived a most recluse life in the midst of a town then the resort of the most illustrious and fashionable personages of Europe. This exemplary attention to their father procured these three amiable sisters the admiration of all the English at Spa, and was the cause of their

elevation to that rank in life to which their merits gave them so just a title. They were all married to noblemen: one to the Earl of Beverley; another to the Duke of Hamilton, and afterwards to the Marquis of Exeter; and a third to the Duke of Northumberland. And it is justice to them to say, that they reflected honour on their rank, rather than derived any from it.[b]

30, 31. (30) favour, grace of person. deceitful, it may be put on to hide really unworthy character. beauty, of countenance. vain, bec. not lasting. It passes with the advancing years, and sad is that woman's lot who has only her beauty to depend upon. feareth the Lord, regarded as the root of piety.[a] "The fear of the Lord is the condition of all womanly as well as manly excellence." (31) fruit .. hands, which is the praise due to a skilful, diligent, and faithful wife.

Feminine beauty (*v.* 30).—I. It is attractive while it lasts. II. With some it lasts to old age; the beauty of such women then. III. The thoughtless have eyes for physical beauty only. IV. Beauty often provokes vanity, and is vain to charm the minds of others who at length discover nothing beneath it. V. Seek that beauty that comes of piety, beauty of heart, and mind, and life, these really promote beauty of person.

Beauty.—Hearing a young lady highly praised for her beauty, Gotthold asked, "What kind of beauty do you mean? Merely that of the body, or that also of the mind? I see well that you have been looking no further than the sign which nature displays outside the house, but have never asked for the host who dwells within. Beauty is an excellent gift of God, nor has the pen of the Holy Spirit forgotten to speak its praise; but it is virtuous and godly beauty alone which Scripture honours, expressly declaring, on the other hand, that a fair woman which is without discretion is as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout (Prov. xi. 22). Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is admired, no doubt, for its showy appearance, but despised for its unpleasant odour. Were her mind as free from pride, selfishness, luxury, and levity, as her countenance from spots and wrinkles, and could she govern her inward inclinations as she does her external carriage, she would have none to match her. But who loves the caterpillar and such insects, however showy their appearance, and bright and variegated the colours that adorn them, seeing they injure and defile the trees and plants on which they settle? What the better is an apple for its rosy skin, if the maggot have penetrated and devoured its heart? What care I for the beautiful brown of the nut, if it be worm-eaten, and fill the mouth with corruption? Even so external beauty of person deserves no praise, unless matched with the inward beauty of virtue and holiness. It is therefore far better to acquire beauty than to be born with it. The best kind is that which does not wither at the touch of fever, like a flower, but lasts and endures on a bed of sickness, in old age, and even unto death."—*Different ideas of beauty.*—What different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human shape and countenance! A fair complexion is a shocking deformity on the Guinea coast; thick lips and a flat nose are a beauty. In some nations, long ears that hang down upon the shoulders are the objects of universal admiration. In China, if a lady's foot is so large as to be fit to walk upon, she is regarded as

b Dr. Cheever.

a "As an imperishable and therefore really praiseworthy possession, there is contrasted with favour and beauty the disposition to fear God."—*O. Zöckler.*

"That love wh. is cemented by youth and beauty, when these moulder and decay, as soon they do, fades too. But if husbands and wives are each reconciled unto God in Christ, and so heirs of life and one with God, then are they truly one in God, each with the other, and that is the surest and sweetest union that can be."—*Archbishop Leighton.*

A woman distinguished for her modesty, meekness, and prudence, and other virtues, will engage affection and respect when other accomplishments fade and decline.

v. 30. *Dr. A. Littleton*, 50; *Dr. Cotton Mather, Ornaments for the Daus. of Zion; Dr. T. Leland*, ii. 267; *R. Warner*, ii. 376; *D. Gibson*, 333.

v. 31. *J. Penn*, 215.

"The devil fisheth best for souls of men when his hook is baited with a lovely limb: love lights

upon the heart, and straight we feel more worlds of wealth gleam in an upturned eye than in the rich heart of the miser sea. Beauty hath made our greatest manhoods weak."—*Alex. Smith.*

b Smith.

"Fragrant the rose, but soon it fades away; the violet sweet, but quickly will decay; the lily fair a transient beauty wears; and the white snow soon weeps away in tears: such is the bloom of beauty, cropt by time, full soon it fades, and withers in its prime."—*Theocritus.*

c Emerson.

d Ld. Kaimes.

"A face that should content me wondrous well, should not be fair, but lovely to behold: of lively look, all grief for to repel with right good grace, so would I that it should speak without word, such words as none can tell."—*Sir Thomas Wyatt.*

e Spenser.

a monster of ugliness. Some of the savage nations in North America tie four boards round the heads of their children, and thus squeeze them, while the bones are tender and gristly, into a form that is almost perfectly square. Europeans are astonished at the absurd barbarity of this practice, to which some missionaries have imputed the singular stupidity of those nations among whom it prevails; but when they condemn those savages, they do not reflect that the ladies in England had, till within these very few years, been endeavouring for near a century past to squeeze the beautiful roundness of their natural shapes into a square form of the same kind.[b]—*Beauty and virtue.*—The problem of restoring to the most original internal beauty is solved by the redemption of the soul. The ruin, or the blank, that we see in nature is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things, and so they appear not transparent, but opaque. The reason why the world lacks unity is, that man is disunited himself. A life in harmony with nature, the love of truth and virtue, will purge the eyes to understand her text, so that the world shall be to us an open book, and every form significant of its hidden life and final cause.[c]—*Dangers of beauty.*—Beauty is a dangerous property, tending to corrupt the mind of the wife, though it soon loses its influence over the husband. A figure agreeable and engaging, which inspires affection without the ebriety of love, is a much safer choice. The graces lose not their influence like beauty. At the end of thirty years, a virtuous woman, who makes an agreeable companion, charms her husband more than at first. The comparison of love to fire holds good in one respect, that the fiercer it burns the sooner it is extinguished.[d]

Compassion for maligned beauty.—

Nought is there under heaven's wide hollowness
That moves more dear compassion of the mind
Than beauty brought to unworthy wretchedness,
Through envy's snares, or fortune's freaks unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightness blind,
Or through allegiance and fast fealty
Which I do owe unto all womankind,
Feel my heart pierced with so great agony
When such I see, that all for pity I could die.[e]

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Introduction.

Title. *Heb.* Koheleth; *Gk.* Ecclesiastes, which in English is equivalent to "The Preacher." The Hebrew title is from the initial word of the book. **Author.** Uncertain. Solomon (*Horne, Angus*), Isaiah (*Rabbi Kimchi*), Hezekiah (*Talmudists*), composed by order of Zerubbabel for his son Abihud (*Grotius*), written after the Babylonian captivity (*Jahn*), or about the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (*Zirkel*). It is to be noted that—(1) It is fuller of Aramaic or Chaldee words than Provs. or Pss., or writings of times of the monarchy. (2) That the word for the Divine Name is not Jehovah, but Elohim. (3) It describes a decay of the social and political state that seems not to belong to the time of David, or Solomon. (4) Its tone of scepticism does not agree with the devoutness of David and Solomon. These points have, however, been controverted. But, on the whole, then, while it must be admitted that the verdict of nearly all recent criticism is against the Solomonic authorship of the book, it must be said that no satisfactory theory has yet been submitted in its place, and that after all we must say of it, as of the Book of Job—in some respects the most like it, and the most unlike, among the books of the Old Testament,—as Origen said of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Who wrote it, God only knows" (*Plumptre*). **Scope.** "Be godly, and concerning everything else be tranquil" (*Luther*). "The great design of this book is evidently to show the utter insufficiency of all earthly pursuits and objects, as the chief end of life, to confer solid happiness, and then to draw men off from apparent good to the only real and permanent good—the fear of God and communion with Him. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' is its first lesson; 'Fear God and keep His commandments,' is its last" (*Angus*). "It is a penitential discourse, and in it the writer endeavours from sad experience to show the vanity of all earthly pursuits, and the insufficiency of earthly enjoyment. The doctrine of a future retribution forms the great basis of this book, and practical religion is its leading truth" (*Pinnock*). (See also *The Quest of the Chief Good*, by the *Rev. S. Cox.*) **Style.** "Bp. Lowth has classed this book among the didactic poetry of the Hebrews; but Mr. Des Vœux considers it as a philosophical discourse written in a rhetorical style, and interspersed with verses, which are introduced as occasion served: whence it obtained a place among the poetical books. To this opinion Bp. Lowth subsequently declared his assent" (*Horne*). "By the Jews it was not reckoned one of the poetical books, and indeed the whole, except iii. 2—8, vii. 1—14, xi. 17, xii. 7, is written in prose" (*Angus*). **Canonicity.** "The canonicity of Eccles. is recognised by the early Christian writers, and though the book is not formally quoted by our Lord or His Apostles, there are several references to it in the New Testament. It is to be noted that in Ecclesiastes wisdom is used in the sense of science, or sagacity; in Proverbs it is identical with piety. It is a strange proof of the depravity of our nature that modern infidels—Frederick the Great, Voltaire, and others—have warmly praised those parts of Ecclesiastes in which Solomon records the false principles which his folly had for the moment led him to maintain. The true wisdom of the book they entirely disregard" (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

According to Mr. Holden. Adopted by Horne.

Part I.—THE VANITY OF EARTHLY CONDITIONS, OCCUPATIONS, AND PLEASURES.

Sect. 1. Vanity of earthly things.....i. 2.
Sect. 2. Labour unprofitable, life transitory i. 3—11.
Sect. 3. Vanity of laborious study..i. 12—18.
Sect. 4. Luxury and pleasure vanity ii. 1—11.
Sect. 5. Human learning but vanity ii. 12—17.
Sect. 6. Human labour vanity ....ii. 18—23.
Sect. 7. Sensual enjoyments empty ii. 24—26.
Sect. 8. A time for all things .....iii. 1—14.
Sect. 9. Vanity of human pursuits iii. 15—17.
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Additional note on the authorship of this book.—If it is the production of Solomon, it presents an interesting and instructive picture of that monarch's return to a better mind, when, at the close of life, he took a retrospect of his past career. The general design of the author is to set forth the nothingness of earthly pursuits and enjoyments, and to recommend the acquisition of heavenly wisdom. From the commencement to vi. 9, the former theme is enlarged upon, the writer reviewing the various conditions and objects of human life, and showing that "all is vanity." From vi. 10 to the end, the excellence of wisdom is exhibited. The sum and crowning lesson of the whole being, "Fear God and keep His commandments" (*Litton*).

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **preacher,** Heb. *koheleth*, fem. noun fr. *kalal*, to call; so signifying an assembler, or convener.[a] Doubtless a symbolical name for Solomon. **in Jerusalem,** the place of his royal residence, and the centre of his kingdom. (2) **vanity,** Heb. *hebel*, found thirty-seven times in this book. That wh. fails to satisfy. **vanity of vanities,**[b] Heb. idiom for the very highest degree of vanity. Comp. "holy of holies," "song of songs." **all,** all sorts, every earthly thing. Things are all vain and unsatisfying when made the *end* and not the means. (3) **profit,**[c] or what is the good of all man's toil? Get what he may it does not satisfy him. **under the sun,** a fig. way of saying, in this present life.[d]

Vanity (*v.* 2).—I. This estimate was made by a competent judge. II. Given in unqualified terms. III. Abundantly endorsed by the historical Scripture. IV. Assented to by all who have finished their course.[e]

Worldly pleasure unsatisfying.—Lord Chesterfield.—The most polished Englishman of the last century was Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth earl of Chesterfield. High-born and well-bred, clever, eloquent, and witty, and endowed with a large amount of natural amenity, he was bent on distinction. To dazzle his contemporaries was the business of his life. He was a man who made his own model. From the speeches of Cicero, from the epigrams of Martial, from the saloons of Paris and Versailles, he gleaned the several ingredients of classic grace and modern refinement, and sought to combine them in the courtier, the statesman, and the orator. He had no God. In the shrine where the Most High should be, there was a dim outline which looked very like a colossal Stanhope carrying a young Chesterfield in its arms; but, unless this mixture of self-idolatry and son-worship deserve the name, there was no religion in the man. He had his reward. At a levee, or in a drawing-room, he moved "the admired of all admirers." Few made such formidable speeches in Parliament. None uttered so many brilliant sayings in society. He got ribbons, plaudits, diplomatic appointments, the smiles of the fair, the envy of his peers; everything except true human affection—everything except the approbation of God. Should any one wish to repeat the man the mould is still extant. It will be found in Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*—a book of which our great moralist said, in effect, that "it inculcates the morals of the profligate with the manners of a dancing-master." But before taking more trouble it is well to know the result. At the close he confessed that his life had been as joyless as it had been selfish and hollow. "I have recently read Solomon with a kind of sympathetic feeling. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not as wise as he: but now I am old enough to feel the truth of his reflection, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.'" Repartees sparkled on his dying lips, but all was dreary within, all was darkness ahead. The fame for which he lived expired before himself; and now truth declines to write his epitaph, and virtue has no garlands for his grave.[f]

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[a] "It describes a person in the act of calling together an assembly of people as if with the intention of addressing them. The word thus understood refers us to the action of wisdom personified, described in Pr. i. 20, viii. 8, etc." —*Spk. Com.*

[b] "The theme of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of all earthly things apart from God." —*Wordsworth.*

[c] From a word signifying to hang over, overflow, remain over and above.

[d] "Sol. writes with this design, that we may not dote upon this life, wh. is under the sun, but may earnestly desire that life wh. is not blighted by that vanity wh. is under the sun, but is enlightened by that truth wh. came from Him who made the sun."—*St. Augustine.*

Ps. xxxix. 5, 6, 11, lxii. 9, cxliv. 4; Ro. viii. 20, 21.

v. 2. *Bousset*, xvi. 194; *R. Erskine*, i. 296; *Bertheau*, ii. 207; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 452; *E. Denison, Univ. Ser.* 29; *Bp. Conybeare*, ii. 481.

[e] *Stems and Twigs.*

[f] *Dr. J. Hamilton.*

4—7. (4) **generation**, the people on the earth are supposed to be changed about every twenty-five to thirty years. So man does not stay on earth long enough to enjoy the fruitage of his labours. **earth . . ever**,[a] it is not absolutely permanent, but its continuance contrasts with the changing races on it. The term "ever" is used in Scripture as a figure, and a comparison. (5) **sun**, *etc.*, it makes no real progress, only repeats the same routine day after day. **hasteth**, *Heb.* panteth.[b] The Psalmist evidently had no idea of the circular form and movement of the earth. (6) **whirleth**, *etc.*, blowing from different quarters, yet settling at last to the prevailing N. or S.[c] **circuits**, or veerings. The word is not used in the modern scientific sense. (7) **not full**, bec. the waters are drawn up as clouds, and sent back to refresh the earth.[d]

Contrast between the duration of earth and the life of man (*v.* 4). —Note some things that verify the greatness of the contrast. 1. History,—which would not be but for those who have passed away; 2. Burial grounds.—yet nature around them is the same; 3. Abodes of the living: how many generations have passed away since this became a city! 4. What shall I be when the present generation has passed away! 5. There are occasional states of feeling in which the reflection comes with special force; 6. How little hold we have on the world! 7. The only essential good to be gained from the world is what may be carried out of it.[e]

Providence in the wind.—The wind has called at yon city, fœtid with miasma, and groaning with pestilence; and, with its besom of swift pinions, it has swept the plague away. It has looked into yon haven, and found a forest of laden ships sleeping over their freights; and it has chased them all to sea. And finding the harvest arrested in a broad and fertile realm, the earth chapped, and the crops withering, it is now hurrying with that black armament of clouds to drench it in lifesome irrigation. To narrow observation or to selfishness, that wind is an annoyance; to faith, it is God's angel forwarding the mighty plan. 'Tis a boisterous night, and Pictish savages curse the noisy blast which shakes their peat-hovel round their ears; but that noisy blast has landed the Gospel on St. Andrew's shore. It blows a fearful tempest, and it sets some rheumatic joints on aching; but the morrow shows, dashed in pieces, the awful Armada which was fetching the Spanish Inquisition to our British Isle. The wind blows east, and detains James's ships at Harwich; but it guides King William to Torbay. Yes, "the wind blows south, and the wind blows north; it whirleth about continually, and returneth again according to its circuits:" but, in the course of these circuits, the wind has blown to our little speck of seagirt happiness the Gospel and Protestantism, and civil and religious liberty.[f]

8—11. (8) **full of labour**, ceaseless movement and activity are around us, more than man can recount.[a] **eye . . hearing**, *i.e.* for man there is no present satisfaction, no rest, though for him, too, all things seem to go in a circle.[b] (9) **no new thing**, no new source of pleasure. Life is a round of the same duties, cares, and pleasures. Things may seem new to individuals, they are not new in themselves.[c] (10) **old time**, *Heb.* ages. (11) **no remembrance**, and therefore things may be thought new wh. really have been before. "Our considering old things as

a Ps. civ. 5, cxix. 90.

b Comp. Ps. xix. 5.

"The metaphor applies rather to the rising sun, which seems laboriously to mount up to the meridian, than to the setting sun." —*Fausset.*

c The N. and S. winds are the two prevailing winds in Palestine and Egypt.

d "Not only what is most stable in creation, as the earth, and what is most glorious, as the sun, but also what seems to be most free, viz., the wind and the rivers, are bound by the same chain of lifeless continuity." —*Wordsworth.*

vv:2—4. *H. Marriott*, 281.

v. 4. *W. Berriman*, ii. 128; *J. Foster*, ii. 117; *Bp. Hobart*, i. 88; *J. Grant*, 371; *F. French*, 127.

e J. Foster.

Wild "as winds that sweep the deserts."—*Dryden.* "As the winds, raging and impetuous." —*Durfey.* "As winds and fighting seas."—*Thomson.*

f Dr. J. Hamilton.

a "Man cannot express all the things in the world which undergo this ceaseless, changeless cycle of vicissitudes."—*Fausset.*

b "The abundance of phenomena, wh. presses on eye, ear, and

the remaining senses, is endless. There are always objects wh. the eye must see, does see, and brings to him who would gladly close his labours." —*Hitzig.*
Pr. xxvii. 20.
c "All things under the sun are only reproductions or modifications of things which already exist, and were created at the beginning. This was true of Sol.'s temple, and of all the glories of his reign, and it is true of all modern inventions and discoveries."—*Wordsworth.*
v. 9. *Dr. J. Trapp*, ii. 303; *J. Saurin*, v. 147; *B. C. Snowdon*, 401.
d W. Stevens.
e K. T. S.

a "The preterite is very frequently used in describing a past which reaches forward into the present." —*Hengstenberg.*

b "Beginning with the time of his accession to the throne, he relates the anxious efforts which he made, with his unprecedented resources, to advance wisdom, pleasure, grandeur, and every personal gratification, and how the result of his experience was 'no profit,' and a conviction that all, even God's gifts of earthly good to good men, in this life are subject to vanity." — *Spk. Com.*

c Elohim is the new is bec. of the continual extinction of the remembrance of former things."

Imaginary schemes of happiness (*v.* 9).—Observe three things. I. The error which he attacks. Discover this by determining the sense of the text. II. Let us admit these truths with all their effects. 1. Examine the appointment of man; 2. Look into the school of the world; 3. Into the experience of Solomon; 4. Review the history of our own lives. III. From all these reflections what consequences shall we draw? 1. They to whom God has appointed the good things of life should know the value of them; 2. Bear patiently the evils of your present condition.[d]

True happiness.—After all our attainments, if we are truly wise, we shall love to sit as humble disciples at the feet of Jesus, to acquire more important knowledge than this world can impart. Human learning will not bear to be brought into comparison with the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified. A little of it may inflate with vanity, but a profound acquaintance with its treasures will deepen humility and render us sensible of our ignorance. A young man named Worgan, in the near view of eternity, said to his mother, "I have been endeavouring to obtain one of the highest seats in the literary world; but I can now willingly resign it to obtain the lowest seat in heaven." And Sir Isaac Newton said, a little before his death, "I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."[e]

12, 13. (12) **preacher**, as *v.* 1. Solomon here begins to give his personal experiences. **in Jerusalem**, distinguished fr. Hebron. Some think that the expression *was king* is only suitable to some one who, at the time of writing, had ceased to be king; and so cannot refer to Solomon. But so much cannot be argued from the mere form of a tense.[a] Sol. was king when this particular trial was made. (13) **gave**, *etc.*, undertook this work heartily.[b] **wisdom**, powers of observation and judgment. **travail**, work regarded as causing care, and anxiety, and effort. **God**, *Heb.* Elohim.[c] The name Jehovah does not occur in this book. **exercised**, or disciplined.

The royal preacher (*v.* 12).—I. Every true preacher is in some sense a king. II. Every king is a preacher of some kind.—*The mark of a true preacher* (*v.* 13).—I. He is a man of study—seeking and searching in order to know. II. He is a man of varied knowledge—"all things." III. He studies heartily, not perfunctorily. IV. He discerns the truth that travail is for the discipline of the sons of men.

Talent without principle.—An affecting illustration of the truth of Solomon's remark is furnished in the history of Combe, the unhappy author of *Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque*. "We find," says a reviewer in the *Companion to the Library*, "this improvident man, and all within a few years, figuring as a boy at Eton, a scholar at Oxford, a student in the Temple, with a very handsome independent fortune; a barrister pleading with success; a man of fashion intimately associating with lords and ladies, and calling himself (from his courtly dress and splendid liveries) 'The Duke;' and then an outcast spendthrift; a private

soldier; a novice in a French monastery, playing the monk to get his bread for the time being: a strolling player; a gentleman's servant; and a waiter at an inn at Swansea. It was after all these metamorphoses that he turned himself into an author. His last scene of all was the King's Bench, where he wrote *Syntax* and some other works; and there he died, after an imprisonment (for debt) of twenty years.

14, 15. (14) works . . sun, the actions and lives of men, not the occurrences of nature. vexation of spirit, *lit.* windy effort. A feeding on wind.[a] Utterly unsatisfying. (15) crooked, *etc.*, prob. a proverbial sentence. Man has no power to alter conditions fixed by God, however unsuitable he may regard them.[b] "Human labour and human knowledge cannot regenerate mankind."

Crooked things straightened (*v.* 15).—I. We are all born with crooked hearts. This may be proved from the Bible, and without the Bible. II. Like the tree or the clay, our hearts are having something done with them. III. The importance of keeping straight while we are being educated. IV. How are we to get straight? Get Jesus to help us. Help ourselves.[c]

Vanity of worldly greatness.—The great Wolsey, after he had climbed the highest round of ambition's ladder, in the evening of life bitterly exclaimed, "Would that I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my king! He would not have abandoned me in my old age." The illustrious statesman, William Pitt, the favourite of king and people, "died," says Wilberforce, his friend, "of a broken heart." On his dying bed he is stated to have said, "I fear I have neglected prayer too much to make it available on a death-bed." Still more distressing was the closing scene of Sheridan's career. He who had stood on the pinnacle of glory, and gained the most flattering distinctions, writes in old age to one of his friends, "I am absolutely undone and broken-hearted." Misfortunes crowded on him, and his last moments were haunted by fears of a prison. Forsaken by his gay associates, dispirited, and world-weary, he closed his eyes in gloom and sorrow. Sir Walter Scott thus gives his dirge of life. Referring to his departure from Abbotsford, he writes:—"When I think what this place now is, and what it has been not long ago, I think my heart will break. . . . Some new object of complaint comes every moment; sicknesses come thicker and thicker: friends are fewer and fewer. The recollection of youth, health, and powers of activity, neither improved nor enjoyed, is a poor strain of comfort. The best is, the long halt will arrive at length and close all." "Save me from the horrors of a gaol," were almost the dying words of the poet Burns. Campbell, who wrote *The Pleasures of Hope*, speaks in this melancholy strain:—"I am alone in the world. My wife and the child of my hopes are dead. My only surviving child is consigned to a living tomb,—a lunatic asylum. My last hopes are blighted. As for fame, it is a bubble that must soon burst. Earned for others, shared with others, it was sweet; but at my age, to my own solitary experience, it is bitter. Left in my chamber alone with myself, is it wonderful my philosophy at times takes flight; that I rush into company; resort to that which blunts but heals no pang; and then, sick of the world and dissatisfied with myself, shrink back into solitude?" Poor Campbell! What a change would have passed over him if he

God of nature, Jehovah the God of the covenant.

v. 13. *S. Smith*, 299; *R. H. Froude*, ii. 14.

a Ho. xii. 1.

b "Man cannot alter what is (apparently) unjust in God's arrangement of the world, nor make or regard its failures perfect; hemmed in within the narrow limits of the world as it is constituted, he is not able to perform the most important thing that he above all things should be able to do."—*Hitzig.* Ec. vii. 13.

v. 14. *Bp. Reynolds*, i. 1; *P. Skelton*, iii. 319; *Dr. S. Johnson*, i. 215; *S. Smith*, ii. 111.

v. 15. *A. Fuller*, 675.

c *Dr. R. Newton.* Look at the convolvulus. The delicate-looking flower, with a slender stalk that loves to climb up very high, should suggest to us how weak and feeble man should forget those things that are beneath, and aspire after a crown of glory. "Life is contracted within a narrow and barren circle, year after year steals somewhat away from their store of comfort, deprives them of some of their ancient friends, blunts some of their power of sensation, or incapacitates them for some function of life."—*Blair.*

had exchanged his philosophy for Christianity,—if he had known the pleasures of Christian hope,—if, in the realised presence of the invisible Jesus, and His unutterable sympathy, he had found "the balm of Gilead," to heal, not to blunt, the pangs of his wounded spirit!"[d]

16—18. (16) communed, entered into counsel with myself. great estate, riches, and influence. more . . Jerusalem, referring either to the Canaanite kings who in early times reigned in Jerusalem; or more prob. to the priests, judges, and two previous kings. The expression should be taken generally. experience, the knowledge was not merely theoretic. (17) madness[a] and folly, things in wh. many men appear to find satisfaction. He wanted his experiences to include all sides of human life. (18) much grief,[b] German prov., "Much wisdom causeth headache."

The bliss of ignorance and folly of wisdom (*v.* 18).—I. The more one knows of himself, the more sad he will be at his sinfulness. II. Or of God, the more sad that he began to serve Him so late, and has served Him so poorly. III. Or of the world, the more sad that its conquest by science should be so slow. IV. But the opposite is also true, that with increase of knowledge comes increase of joy. V. And the joy outweighs the grief. VI. The greatest joy of all is to know God, and Jesus whom He has sent.

Uses of Book of Ecclesiastes.—Dr. Hamilton said that truly the Book of Ecclesiastes has a special bearing upon the time of restlessness and revolution—a time when years bring about a series of changes for which decades or centuries would have been required in former periods of the earth's history. Through all, it is still true that life is as full of labour as ever; machinery and modern science have in many instances given to man's work a new bias and direction, yet they have done little to lighten the burden, since with fresh accessions of knowledge new exigencies arise. And there come moments in the history of the thoughtful and sensitive when, instead of being stimulated by the rush and whirl of modern life, they are almost ready to shrink within themselves, or drop their tools from their slack and nerveless arms. How can they play their part satisfactorily in an era so exacting and iron-like as this? Or, listening to the sullen grinding of some mighty engine, which, heedless of day or night, works on unresting, they think, "What a puny and intermittent creature is man as compared with the machine human skill has devised!" And they almost doubt the superiority of mind over matter, since it is the sympathetic nature of mind that makes so often the burdens of life press heavily. The philosopher rubs his chin, and preaches the "gospel of labour," or tells us of its dignity, yet this helps us little; only when we look skyward does the load cease to weary. Then do we realise that it is the will of God that labour should succeed labour in the lives of most,—each, besides its immediate object, tending towards some final goal. Even pagans thought that "there must be an end, to which all other ends are means;" and if we ask Aristotle what he supposes this to be, he vaguely answers, "Happiness." But whose? and how realised? To the Christian worker, however, it is infallibly secured, for it depends not upon himself, not upon the *quantum* of labour performed, but is secured by God's promise,

d **Bullock.**

a Lit. vaunting extravagance.

b "We become more sensible of our ignorance and impotence, and, therefore, sorrowful, in proportion as we discover more of the constitution of nature, and the scheme of providence in the government of the world; every discovery serving to convince us that more remains concealed of wh. we had no suspicion before."—*Bp. Butler.*

Ec. xii. 12; 1 Co. iii. 18–20.

"The deeper our vision the more clearly we perceive the imperfections among the children of men, and that usually produces unrest in the mind."—*Hansen.*

vv. 16, 17. *Massillon*, xiv. 182.

vv. 17, 18. *A. Fuller*, 346.

v. 18 *Bp. Wilkins*, 165; *Dr. R. South*, ix. 251; *R. Fiddes*, iii. 202; *T. Balguy*, i. 18.

"Yet true renown is st ll with virtue join'd, but lust of power lets loose the bridled mind; the blast which his ambitious spirit swell'd, see by how weak a tenure it was held. If glory was a bait that angels swallow'd, how

which faith accepts. Whether we accomplish much or little is not a matter of indifference: still, we need not vex ourselves if in the general fulness of labour our share looks poor, so that it be done unto God.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) I said, *etc.*, commencing a new section, in wh. Sol. relates his experience in using his *riches* to procure satisfaction. prove thee, test or try thee.[a] mirth, that kind of self-indulgence which excites mirth: the pleasures of gay and merry society. etc.[b] (2) laughter, the unrestrained cheerfulness attending sensual enjoyment. mad, it puts men beside themselves, out of their own self-control. (3) unto wine, or the pleasures of the table, rich feasting and abundant drinking. acquainting, *etc.*,[c] not abandoning himself to indulgence, but carefully observing its influence upon him. But he became the victim of his dangerous experiments.

The drunkard's conversion.—An aged Christian gave a visitor of the poor the following account of his conversion. He said that previous to the Lord's meeting with him he was a notoriously wicked character, and among many other vices he was much addicted to drinking to excess. On a certain occasion he had what he termed "broken out," and had been in a state of intoxication for, I think he said, a fortnight. When the effects of the liquor left him, and he began to come to himself, his spirits sank unusually low, and guilt and remorse preyed on his mind so much that he was driven to despair, and felt himself so miserable that he determined on the rash act of putting an end to his existence. He accordingly procured a rope to hang himself. At that time his wife, who was a truly pious woman, was at chapel. A thought came into his mind that he should like his wife to know his fate soon after he was dead. This induced him to go round the back of the chapel to seek for a convenient place to commit the fatal deed, expecting that when the congregation came out he should be found dead, and that his wife would be informed. When passing the back of the chapel, with the rope in his pocket, the sound of the minister's voice caught his ear, and induced him to go and look in at the door. At the instant the minister was preaching in a very animated manner on the efficacy of the blood of Christ to cleanse the guilty conscience, stated that the Saviour was able and willing to save the vilest rebels, and then gave a most pressing invitation to the chief of sinners, saying—

"Come and welcome, come and welcome,
All that feel your need of Him."

These and similar sentences so penetrated his heart that they produced feelings which are easier conceived than described. When the service was over he went home, fell on his knees, and cried for mercy. His wife was astonished at first at the wonderful change; but, on inquiry, she found the Lord had answered her prayer in behalf of her husband.

4—6. (4, 5) gardens, *etc.*, paradises, parks, or pleasure-gardens.[a] (6) pools, "the so-called Solomon's pools lie S. of Bethlehem, upon the usual route from Hebron to Jerusalem, and

then should souls allied to sense resist it?"—*Dryden.*

a I will try whether thou wilt feel contented and happy in this new object of thy experience, viz., in cheerful sensual enjoyment.

b "Mirth is the entertainment of the fancy, and though it comes short of the solid delights of the rational powers, yet it is to be preferred before those that are merely carnal and sensual. Some distinguish man from the brutes, not only as *animal rationale*, a rational animal, but as *animal risibile*, a laughing animal." — *Mat. Henry.*

c "He acted not as a sensual voluptuary, but rather as a philosophical experimentalist."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 1. *Dr. A. Markland*, ii. 49; *T. Newman*, i. 99; *Dr. F. Francklin*, iii. 47; *S. Smith*, i. 403.

v. 2. *T. Hunter*, ii. 307; *J. Marriott*, 323.

v. 3. *Dr. J. Orr*, i. 38; *Dr. C. Hussey*, 265.

a "There was, about 50 stadia from Jerusalem, a certain place

called Ethan, very pleasant in fine gardens, and abounding in rivulets of water, whither he (Solomon) was wont to go every morning, sitting on high in his chariot."—*Josephus.*

b Kitto.

"The first pool is 582 by 207 and 50 feet deep; the second is 423 by 250 and 39 deep; the third is 380 by 236 and 25 deep. All of them, however, are considerably narrower at the upper end."—*Robinson.*

vv. 4, 5. *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 527.

c H. Eaton.

about six miles from the Holy City."[b] An adjoining hill still bears the name of the "Little Paradise."

A people's park (*vv.* 5, 6).—I. We are struck with its extent: so the Scriptures are long and broad, and well laid out. II. Like the Bible in the variety here witnessed: trees, flowers, streams, etc. III. Open to all: so is the Bible. IV. Marked by order and obedience to law: law in beauty and utility. V. The chief glory is the river that flows through it.[c]

Pools of Solomon.—"If," says Dean Stanley, "Hebron and Bethlehem are special memorials of David, there is one spot between the two which calls to mind in a lively form the works of the peaceful reign which succeeded. In the long green vale of Urtâs, unusually green amongst the rocky knolls of Judæa, Solomon 'planted him vineyards and made him gardens and a "paradise," and planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits, and made him reservoirs of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.' From these gardens came, in part at least, the imagery of the Canticles; and in these, probably more than anywhere else, the wise king cultivated his knowledge of trees, from the transplanted cedar to the native hyssop. The great reservoirs still remain; and the huge square hill in its neighbourhood, by Europeans called 'the Frank Mountain,' is known to the Arabs only as the 'Jebel el Fureidis,' the 'Mountain of the Little Paradise,' evidently from its vicinity to the gardens of the Wâdy Urtâs, which in the lament of Solomon are expressly called by this very name."

7—9. (7) **got**, or bought: distinguished fr. those born in the house.[a] **great and small**, or oxen and sheep. **all . . before me**, *comp.* David's flocks and herds (1 Chro. xxvii. 29, 31). (8) **peculiar treasure**, that for wh. each district or kingdom was specially famous. This was offered to Sol. as gift, or paid as tribute. **singers**, the common luxury of Eastern courts.[b] They sang and played whilst the guests were at the table. (9) **my wisdom**, power to observe and philosophise about it all: see *v.* 3.

Earth's treasures unsatisfying.—A ship, bearing a hundred emigrants, has been driven from her course and wrecked on a desert island, far from the tracks of man. There is no way of escape; but there are means of subsistence. An ocean unvisited by ordinary voyagers circles round their prison; but they have seed, with a rich soil to receive, and a genial climate to ripen it. Ere any plan has been laid, or any operations begun, an exploring party returns to head-quarters, reporting the discovery of a gold mine. Thither instantly the whole party resort to dig. They labour successfully, day by day, and month after month. They acquire and accumulate large heaps of gold. But spring is past, and not a field has been cleared, nor a grain of seed committed to the ground. The summer comes, and their wealth increases; but the store of food is small. In harvest they begin to discover that their heaps of gold are worthless. When famine stares them in the face, a suspicion shoots across their fainting hearts that the gold has cheated them. They rush to the woods, fell the trees, dig the roots, till the ground, sow the seed. It is too late! Winter has come; and their seed rots in the ground. They die of want in the midst of their treasures. This earth is the little isle, eternity the ocean round it; on this shore we have

a Comp. Ezr. ii. 55, 58.

"On account of their natural fidelity, slaves born in the house were regarded as a very valuable possession."—*O. Zöckler.*

b 2 Sa. xix. 35.

c W. Arnot.

"Lowliness is young ambition's ladder, whereto the climber upward turns his face; but when he once obtains the utmost round, he then unto the ladder turns his back, looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend."—*Shakespeare.*

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains the white radiance of eternity."—*Shelley*

been cast. There is a living seed, but gold mines attract us: we spend spring and summer there, winter overtakes us toiling there, destitute of the bread of life, forgetting that we ought to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto us."[c]

10, 11. (10) **whatsoever**, *etc.*, he never had the pain of restriction and limitation; he had no wish ungratified. **my portion**,[a] this temporary joy and rejoicing was all the portion he gained, and he felt that it was not worth the labour. (11) **no profit**, no permanent satisfying profit.[b]

Love not the world (*v.* 11).—This passage suggests to us—I. The habit of men in pursuing worldly objects. II. The evils by which worldly objects are pursued and invariably attended. III. The vast importance of turning our attention from worldly objects and of seeking the attainment of far higher blessings.[b]

Worldly things unsatisfying.—The worm at the core.—There was a rich man at the court of King Herod; he was his high chamberlain, and was clothed in costly apparel, and lived in the greatest state and magnificence. And there came to him from distant lands a friend of his youth, whom he had not seen for many years. Anxious to do him honour, the high chamberlain made a great feast, and invited all his friends. The tables were laden with the most delicate viands on dishes of gold and silver, and many costly vessels filled with wines of all kinds. The rich man sat at the head of his table; on his right hand sat the friend who had come from distant lands; and they ate, and drank, and were satisfied. Then said the stranger to the king's high chamberlain, "I have never seen such magnificence as this in my native land." And he praised all he saw, and esteemed his friend the happiest of men. But the rich man, the king's high chamberlain, took an apple from off a golden dish; the apple was large and smooth, and rosy as the cheek of a sleeping infant; and as he handed it to his friend he said, "Behold this apple, it lay upon a golden dish, and it is lovely to look upon." And the stranger, the friend of his youth, took the apple and cut it through; but, alas! at its core was a worm! Then the stranger gave a glance towards his host. But the high chamberlain looked down and sighed.[c]

12–14. (12) **after the king**, the meaning prob. is, that no man can hereafter have so good an opportunity of testing what power there is in so-called earthly good to satisfy the soul.[a] He is about to give what may seem to many a surprising conclusion, so he reaffirms his peculiar fitness to give such a judgment. (13) **wisdom . . folly**, this is his conclusion. Wisdom restrains pleasure so as to make it serve good uses, but folly yields to pleasure, and is ensnared and degraded thereby.[b] (14) **in his head**,[c] so that he may use them. **darkness**, the dimness brought on by self-indulgences. **one event**, death.

Eyes and no eyes.—The Russian proverb says of the non-observant man, "He goes through the forest and sees no firewood." Dr. Johnson once said, "Some men will learn more in the Hampstead stage than others in the tour of Europe." Sir Isambard Brunel took his first lessons in forming the Thames Tunnel from the tiny ship-worm. He saw how the little creature perforated the wood with its well-armed head, first in one

"Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up thine own life's means."—*Shakespeare.*

a My profit, my advantage.

b 1 Ti. vi. 6—11; 1 Jno. ii. 15—17.

v. 11. *Abp. Sharp*, vi. 283.

b J. Parsons.

"When Garrick showed Dr. Johnson his fine house, gardens, statues, pictures, etc., at Hampton Court, what ideas did they awaken in the mind of that great man? Instead of a flattering compliment that was expected, 'Ah! David, David!' said the Doctor, 'these are the things which make a death-bed terrible!'"—*J. Whitecross.*

"A man's life is an appendix to his heart."—*South.*

c Dr. Krummacher.

a "What is any man that in this study of wisdom and folly shall come after me, who from my position have had such peculiar advantages for carrying it on? That which man did of old he can but do again; he is not likely to add to the result of my researches, nor even to equal them."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The real strength of life is in wisdom alone, whilst folly

is vain, empty, and unsubstantial."—*Elster.*

"The baffled trial needs not be repeated." —*Mat. Henry.*

c The eyes of his understanding.

d S. Smiles.

a Comp. 1 Co. xv. 30; Ga. v. 11.

v. 17. *Saurin,* v. 167; *L. Booker,* 64.

"In the morning we carry the world like Atlas; at noon we stoop and bend beneath it; and at night it crushes us flat to the ground."—*Beecher.*

b W. Stevens.

a "One hope alone was left to the disappointed worldling, the perpetuation of his name and riches, laboriously gathered, through his successor."—*Fausset.*

b Ps. xxxix. 6.

v. 20. *T. Emlyn,* iii. 87.

c W. Clift.

"Worldly riches are like nuts: many clothes are torn in getting them, many a tooth broke in cracking them, but never a belly filled with eating them."—*Venning.*

d Dr. Cheever.

a Equity is right consideration of the claims of others, and the harmonious adjustment of them with our own claims. Or, it is

direction and then in another, till the archway was complete, and then daubing over the roof and sides with a kind of varnish; and by copying this work exactly, on a large scale, Brunel was at length enabled to accomplish the work.*d*—*Zeal and prudence.* —The late Rev. Charles Simeon thus aptly illustrates zeal and prudence:—Two ships were aground at London Bridge. The proprietors of one sent for a hundred horses, and pulled it to pieces; the proprietors of the other waited for the tide, and with sails and rudder directed it as they pleased.

15–17. (15) **why . . wise?** Seeing I shall not live to reap the fruits of wisdom, how am I better for being wise?*a* **vanity,** the arrangement that the wise is no better off in relation to death than the fool. (16) **no remembrance,** no perpetual memorial of those who have lived their lives prudently. Sol. here speaks in a very sad and melancholy frame. The light of eternity puts meaning and solemnity on our present life. **as the fool,** *see* 2 Sa. iii. 33; Ps. xlix. 10. (17) **hated life,** he felt weary of life wh. had so little real result and fruitage. The term used indicates disgust, weariness, antipathy.

Disgust with life (*v.* 17).—I. Rid the text of several false meanings which it may seem at first sight to countenance. We may be disgusted with life—1. Through melancholy; 2. Misanthropy; 3. Discontent; 4. Ennui. II. Proceed to justify the sense given.*b*

18–20. (18) **man . . after me,** Sol. could not retain what he might gain. The fruit of his labours another would reap. But we need not regard this fact in so melancholy a way.*a* (19) **wise,** to make good use of it. **a fool,***b* to squander it all away. So often the sons of the rich scatter, in frivolities, all that the parents have laboriously gathered. Sol. evidently had little pleasure in his son Rehoboam. (20) **despair of all,** he could get satisfaction out of nothing which his riches could procure.

Folly of amassing wealth for children (*vv.* 18, 19).—I. It takes from children the expectation and the purpose to succeed in life by their own efforts. II. It deprives children of the education and discipline of self-reliance. III. It educates children in the radical error that they are not to do service in the world, but are to be served. IV. It brings evil to parents as well as children. V. Society suffers from this evil, as, in consequence of it, it is deprived, in a great measure, of the active services of the children of the rich. VI. This evil prevents united effort among the rich for the industrial welfare of the community in which they live.*c*

The rich man's heir.—An old woman, who showed the house and pictures at Towcester, expressed herself in these remarkable words:—"That is Sir Robert Farmer; he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house, and paid for it; managed well, saved money, and died rich. That is his son. He was made a lord, took a place at court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!" A very concise but full account, and fraught with a valuable moral lesson. "He layeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."*d*

21–23. (21) **in equity,***a* or Heb. may mean, *with success:* but the ordinary sense of equity, as social right, is equally suitable. **not laboured therein,** it seems to be a rule of life that

some are to gain, and others are to spend.[b] (22) **hath man**, *i.e.* the man himself, whose life is so brief after the fruits of his life-labours are won. **vexation**, worry of his business and his struggle. (23) **his travail**, or toil. The penalty of sin is not toil, but *anxious toil*, toil in the "sweat of the face." **not rest . . night**, the planning and scheming even preventing sleep.

Time.—Time, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity, and is for ever lost and swallowed up there; and while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things with it which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by Providence to the duration of all the pleasant and desirable scenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, and all that is made of flesh and blood. Let us not doat upon anything here below; for heaven hath inscribed "vanity" upon it. The moment is hastening when the decree of heaven shall be uttered, and Providence shall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, "Its time shall be no longer."[c]

24—26. (24) **nothing better**, *etc.*, three trans. of this sentence have been suggested. 1. Is it not better for man to eat?[a] 2. There is no happiness for the man who eats.[b] 3. There is no happiness for man but in eating.[c] **eat**, *etc.*, Sol. suggests that the amount of pleasure wh. comes immediately out of the eating and the working is all a man may hope to gain.[d] (25) **more than I**, as a rich king he had every possible delicacy at command. (26) **travail**, toil with anguish in it. Toil bringing no satisfying food to the toiler.

The use of appetite (*v.* 24).—I. Man must labour in order to eat. II. He must eat in order to live. III. What is thus a necessity, is also a pleasure. IV. The pleasure of the palate a God-ordained incentive to toil, and reward of it. V. All this is also true of soul-nourishment. "Blessed are they who hunger," etc.

giving to each his due according to the sense of natural right. In law the term is used of a court wh. decides cases by regard to moral, as distinguished from legal, right or claim.

b There is a common saying in the North of England to this effect, "The first generation buys the carriage, the second rides in the carriage, and the third pawns the carriage."

c Dr. Watts.

a Luther, Vulg., etc.

b Septuagint, Knobel, etc.

c O. Zöckler, etc.

d "To eat and drink, and let one's soul be merry, is the triad of sensual life, wh. is sometimes used, in a bad sense, of vicious excess and indulgence, and again in a good or morally unprejudicial sense."—*O. Zöckler.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **season**, fitting time, or more exactly here, a fixed and limited time.[a] (2) **be born**, *Heb.* to bear. Sol. thus impressively sets forth the fickleness and mutability of everything on earth. (3) **to kill**, judicially, or in defensive war. (4) **dance**, the expression of gladness and rejoicing.[b] Sol. does not here assert that everything is predetermined, and so teach fatalism. He is but weary with the ceaseless and orderly change fr. one thing to its opposite, wh. he observes all around him.

A time to die (*v.* 2).—I. It is the time of parting—of finally parting with our dear brother. II. This is a season of weeping. III. This weeping, parting season is also replete with instruction. 1. It is here we feel that our nature is social; 2. It is here that we learn that our nature is mortal; 3. It is here, too, that we learn that our nature is sinful; 4. It also confirms our faith in the validity and value of our common Christianity.[c]

A season for everything.—At a festival party of old and young the question was asked, "Which season of life is most happy?" After being freely discussed by the guests, it was referred for answer to the host, upon whom was the burden of fourscore

a "He shows that all things on earth ebb and flow in a restless vicissitude, and are succeeded by their contraries, and that nothing under the heaven 'continueth in one stay,' and that it is only things spiritual and Divine wh. are not affected by the mutations of time."—*St. Jerome.*

b "There is no music in the life that sounds with idiot laughter solely; there's not a string at-

tuned to mirth but has its chord in melancholy." —*Thos. Hood.*

c Studies for the Pulpit.

d Dr. Adams

years. He asked if they had not noticed a group of trees before the dwelling, and said: "When the spring comes, and in the soft air the buds are breaking on the trees, and they are covered with blossoms, I think, How beautiful is spring! And when summer comes, and covers the trees with its heavy foliage, and singing birds are all among the branches, I think, How beautiful is summer! When autumn loads them with golden fruit, and their leaves bear the gorgeous tint of frost, I think, How beautiful is autumn! And when it is sere winter, and there is neither foliage nor fruit, then I look up, and through the leafless branches—as I could never until now—I see the stars shine through."[d]

a Isa. v. 2, lxii. 10.

b 2 Sa. i. 2, 11, etc.

5—8. (5) **stones**, regarded as injuring the land,[a] and as material for building. **refrain**, or be far from. (6) **get**, seek, or acquire. (7) **rend**, as in seasons of mourning.[b] (8) **hate**, in the usual Bible sense, wh. we can only express by "loving less," or "being indifferent to."

vv. 1—8. *H. Goodwin*, iii. 334.

The time for speech (*v.* 7).—I. When one has something to say suited to the hearer and the occasion. II. When one is unruffled in temper and calm in mind. III. When the occasion and the audience minister the opportunity. IV. No time but is fit for the speech of prayer.

The worldling is like the hinder wheel of a carriage, ever following after the front wheel of happiness, but never overtaking it.

c S. Stennett.

Time for all things.—Time is the gift of God, a boon of inestimable value. What pity it should be abused or trifled with! I say not that it is to be wholly employed in meditation and devotion. That man mistakes religion who, under a notion of exalted piety, turns his back on the world, and retires into obscurity. There is a time for everything under the sun. A time for prudent consideration about our temporal interests: a time for honest labour, to procure a subsistence, and to acquire a competence; a time for food and sleep; a time for recreation and amusement. We may enjoy what God has given us, as well as labour for it.[c]

a "After reviewing the works of man in a new light, viz., as works ordained by God, and parts of His great design, he repeats his question as in ch. i. 3."—*Spk. Com.*

9—11. (9) **profit**, permanent good for himself. In the perpetual change of things, there is nothing lasting, no continuous happiness.[a] (10) **sons of men**, *lit.* children of Adam. See Ge. iii. 17—19. **exercised**, and so cultured, tried, and taught. A sinful world had better be a travailling world, and it cannot but be a troublous world. (11) **in his time**, within His limitations. On these words rests the emphasis of the verse.[b] **world . . heart**, or given them the power to *think about* the world, and God's ways with it and them. **find out**, fully, or perfectly. We are always studying to know more of God; never exhausting the mysteries of creation or Providence.

b "God has arranged all things beautifully in this life, but always only 'in His time,' always only so that it remains beautiful and good for man during its restricted time, but after that becomes an evil for him; therefore always only so that the glory of this earth soon reaches its end." —*O. Zöckler.*

The world in the soul (*v.* 11).—I. The world is in every man's heart as a mental image. II. As a necessary influence. III. As a great reality. 1. The character of the material world is to a man what he makes of it; 2. The character of the human world is to man what he makes of it; 3. The character of the god of the world is to man what he makes of it. The subject teaches—(1) The greatness of the human soul; (2) The duty of mental modesty; 3. The necessity of soul-culture: 4. The nature of the millenial glory; 5. The need of Divine influence.

12—15. (12) **good**, profit, *v.* 9. Lasting, satisfying good. **rejoice**, with the measure of present joy that is attainable. **do good**, Ps. xxxiv. 15, xxxvii. 3. "Doing good is a principal con-

a "The vanity, therefore, which belongs to all hu-

dition and occupation of human happiness." (13) **eat**, *etc.*, as ch. ii. 24. (14) **for ever**,[a] in the sense of complete, and including continuous. **fear**, with the reverence that is kin with dependence. (15) **that . . been**, as ch. i. 9. **requireth . . past**, or seeketh again that wh. is driven away.[b] Past things are not lost. In the Divine order they are sure to turn up again.

The impotency of time (*v.* 15).—This language will apply—1. To all the elements of material existence ; 2. To all the steps of mankind ; 3. To all the general types of human character ; 4. To all the principles of the Divine government ; 5. To the grand design of all things ; 6. To the recollections of the human memory ; 7. To all the conditions of man's well-being.

16—18. (16) **place of judgment**, seat of the authorised judge. **wickedness**, the special wickedness of corrupt decisions determined by bribes.[a] **righteousness**, innocence or virtue, as applied to the individual man. (17) **God shall judge**, the strange things of human life will yet one day be Divinely rectified.[b] **time there**, *i.e.* with God. (18) **estate**, condition of suffering and persecution. It has its gracious purpose. It reveals men to themselves and makes them humble. **beasts**, no better than the beasts without the grace of God.[c] Not the brutal disposition of beasts, but their subjection to the rule of death, is here referred to.

Fragments of time.—As in money, so in time, we are to look chiefly to the smallest portions. Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves. Take care of the minutes, and the hours and years will take care of themselves. Gold is not found in California for the most in great masses, but in little grains. It is sifted out of the sand in minute particles, which, melted together, produce the rich ingots that excite the world's cupidity. So the spare pieces of time, the shreds, the odds and ends of time put together, may form a very great and beautiful work. Hale wrote his *Contemplations* when on his circuits. Dr. Mason Good translated Lucretius in his carriage, while, as a physician, he rode from door to door. One of the chancellors of France penned a bulky volume in the successive intervals of daily waiting for dinner. Doddridge wrote his *Exposition* chiefly before breakfast. Kirke White studied Greek, went over the nouns and verbs, as he was going to and from a lawyer's office. Burney learned French and Italian while riding on horseback. Franklin laid the foundation of his wonderful stock of knowledge in his dinner hours and evenings, while working as a printer's boy. In the Palace of Industry there were several curious specimens of art, wrought by humble individuals out of such fragments of time as they could secure from their regular occupations. Oh, the preciousness of moments! no gold or gems can be compared to them. Yet all have them ; while some are thereby enriched and others leave themselves in poverty. The wealth of time is like gold in the mine—like the gem in the pebble—like the diamond in the deep. The mine must be worked—the pebble ground and polished—the deep fathomed and searched.[d]

19, 20. (19) **that**, viz., death.[a] **one breath**, the breathing of the air is the common sign of life in animals and in man.

man and earthly things, is not of God; it is no part of His work, but is a consequence of man's fall."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The meaning of the *v.* is that there is a connection between events past, present, and future ; and this connection exists in the justice of God who controls all."—*Spk. Com.*

a Ec. v. 8.

b "If judgment instantly followed every sin, there would be no scope for free-will, faith, and perseverance of saints in spite of difficulties."—*Fausset.*

"It is an unspeakable comfort to the oppressed that their cause will be heard over again."—*Mat. Henry.*

c "Every man that minds his body only, and not his soul, makes himself no better than a brute, and must wish, at least, to die like one."—*Ibid.*

v. 16. *Dr. A. Markland*, ii. 69.

v. 17. *Dr. J. Barrow*, v. 514 ; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 365 ; *Dr. J. Drysdale*, ii. 237.

d Dr. Stoughton.

a Called here, by a bold metaphor, *chance*. "For

chance are the sons of men, and chance the beasts."

"That is said to be vain which vanisheth."—*Arrowsmith.*

"Uncurb'd ambition, unresisting sloth, and base dependence, are the fiends accurst."—*Mason.*

b H. Smith.

no preeminence, in respect of the uncertainty and the peril of death. The expression must be strictly limited to its connection. Both beast and man are "fortuities." (20) one place, the grave. dust, Ge. iii. 19.

Death.—Where are they who founded this goodly city? who possessed these fair houses, and walked these pleasant fields, who created these stately temples, who kneeled in these seats, who preached out of this place, but thirty years agone? Our fathers have summoned us, and we must summon our children to the grave. While we play our pageants upon this stage of short continuance, every man hath a part, some longer, and some shorter; and while the actors are at it, suddenly Death steps upon the stage, like a hawk which separates one of the doves from the flight: he shoots his dart, where it lights there falls one of the actors dead before him, and makes all the rest stand aghast: they muse, and mourn, and bury him, and then to the sport again.[b]

21, 22. (21) that goeth, or perhaps better, *whether it goeth.*[a] It is evidently the question of the bitterly sceptical man. Some commentators think it is a clear declaration of the difference bet. the future of the spirit of man, and of the beast; but this would seem to be putting our notions into the Sacred Word.[b] Of the future of the spirit of beasts nothing whatever has been revealed to us. (22) rejoice, Sol. returns from consideration of moral mysteries to the simple but poor conclusion he has already twice reached.[c]

Cheerful piety.—You often hear of the Puritans, and this has formed our adjective, Puritanical. I imagine there is a good deal of mistake about the Puritans in this matter of recreations. I can scarcely think that they would have done the noble work they accomplished had they been the kind of men this term includes. We are certainly told of John Owen, the prince of the Puritans, and the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, that "he delighted in manly exercises, in leaping, throwing the bar, bell-ringing, playing the flute, and similar amusements." These Puritans, you may rely upon it, were far more genial men than their enemies represented. It is the little nature that can only be grave; it is the little nature that can only be funny. A great nature has room in his soul for both the serious and the pleasant.[d]

a So *LXX.*, *Vulg.*, *Ewald*, etc.

b A further suggestion is that this *v.* is a reflection on how few there are who consider the difference bet. the future of man and beast, and let the difference order their conduct in this present life.

c Ec. ii. 24, iii. 13 *v.* 21. *Dr. J. Edwards*, 110.

This life is like an inn, in which the soul spends a few moments on its journey.

d W. Guest.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) oppressions, violence; refusals of justice; governmental and social tyrannies. no comforter, on the supposition that this present life was *all* to them. God is the comforter of the oppressed: but apart from Him, their life-condition seems hopeless.[a] (2) praised the dead,[b] as Job iii. 13—21. (3) not yet been, the unborn: a vehement expression,[c] to be treated as a strong figure.

Comfort (*v.* 1).—I. Men have need of sympathy, especially under certain circumstances. II. Here is a sad case supposed; the oppressed and sad, without human comfort. III. We are reminded of the Divine Father,—the God of all consolation. IV.

a "If religion were not taken into account, to die as soon as possible would be desirable, so as not to suffer, or witness, oppressions."—*Fausset.*

b "For dreadful is that gloomy vale; and then the dark descent

And of the words of Jesus,—"I will not leave you comfortless." V. And of the work of the Holy Spirit,—the Comforter.

Enjoyment of the comforts of life.—Believe me, I speak it deliberately and with full conviction, I have enjoyed many of the comforts of life, none of which I wish to esteem lightly: often have I been charmed with the beauties of nature, and refreshed with her bountiful gifts. I have spent many an hour in sweet meditation, and in reading the most valuable productions of the wisest men. I have often been delighted with the conversation of ingenious, sensible, and exalted characters: my eyes have been powerfully attracted by the finest productions of human art, and my ears by enchanting melodies. I have found pleasure when calling into activity the powers of my own mind, when residing in my own native land or travelling through foreign parts, when surrounded by large and splendid companies—still more, when moving in the small endearing circle of my own family: yet, to speak the truth before God, who is my Judge, I must confess I know not any joy that is so dear to me, that so fully satisfies the inmost desires of my mind, that so enlivens, refines, and elevates my whole nature, as that which I derive from religion, from faith in God: as one who not only is the parent of men, but has condescended, as a brother, to clothe Himself with our nature. Nothing affords me greater delight than a solid hope that I partake of His favours, and rely on His never-failing support and protection. . . . He, who has been so often my hope, my refuge, my confidence, when I stood upon the brink of an abyss, where I could not move one step forward; He who, in answer to my prayer, has helped me when every prospect of help vanished; that God who has safely conducted me, not merely through flowery paths, but likewise across precipices and burning sands; may this God be thy God, thy refuge, thy comfort, as He has been mine.[c]

4—6. (4) **every right work**, *i.e.* every work wh. seems right bec. it proves successful. Success is man's imperfect and unworthy test of right. **for this**, *i.e.* for his success.[a] So even men's successes are not all blessing to them. (5) **fool**, *etc.*, as Pr. vi. 10, xxiv. 33. **eateth . . flesh**, *i.e.* "he is a self-tormentor, never satisfied, his spirit preying on itself."[b] (6) **handful**, *lit.* what fills the hollow of a hand. **quietness**, the restfulness of honest labour. **both hands**, or fists grasping tightly. Better take this ver. as an answer to the feverish jealousy and indulgent idleness of prev. *vv.*

An old portrait of modern men (*vv.* 4—8).—I. Here is a man working for the good of society. 1. The goodness of heaven in sending such men in every age; 2. The rightful acknowledgments of most useful services are not to be expected on earth; 3. The moral state of society is both unwise and unrighteous. II. Here is a man utterly worthless in society. 1. He exhausts his own property; 2. He wrongly estimates his own happiness. III. Here is a man avariciously making use of society. 1. He sketches the world entirely for himself; 2. Unremittingly for himself.[c]

Envy insatiable.—Mr. Badman's envy was so rank and strong, that if it at any time turned its head against a man, it would hardly ever be pulled in again. He would watch ever that man to do him mischief, as the cat watches over the mouse to destroy it; yea, he would wait seven years, but he would have an oppor-

so deep, that none can reascend the steeps." — *Anacreon.*

"Hope not for immortality — the waning moons again their waste repair; but we, when once to death gone down, are nought but *dust and shadow.*" —*Horace.*

c Comp. Job iii. 10, x. 18; Ec. vi. 3; Je. xx. 14; Mat. xxvi. 24.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 263.

v. 2. *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 551.

"All religion and all ethics are summed up in justice." — *Conway.*

c Lavater.

a Horace complains that every ancient hero found by bitter personal experience, that envy of heroism is only quenched by the hero's death.

b Is. ix. 20, xlix. 26.

v. 4. *Dr. T. Wise*, 164.

v. 6. *Dr. J. Langhorne*, i. 185.

c Dr. D. Thomas.

"A good man and a wise man may at times be angry with the world, at times grieved for it; but be sure no man was ever discontented with the

world who did his duty in it."—*Southey.*

tunity to hurt him: and when he had it, he would make him feel the weight of his envy. This envy is the very father and mother of a great many hideous and prodigious wickednesses. It both begets them, and also nourishes them up till they come to their cursed maturity in the bosom of him that entertains them.[d]

d Bunyan.

"What so foolish as the chase of fame! How vain the prize! how impotent our aim! For what are men who grasp at praise sublime, but bubbles on the rapid stream of time, that rise and fall, that swell, and are no more? born and forgot, ten thousand in an hour."—*Young.*

"Crates threw his gold into the sea, saying, 'I will destroy thee, lest thou destroy me!' If men do not put the love of the world to death, the love of the world will put them to death."—*Venning.*

a Dr. Arrowsmith.

7, 8. (7) **vanity**, in one of its particular forms. (8) **second**, any one related to him, for whom he might work. **end.** **labour**, though he can do nothing with his riches, yet he struggles for them as if they were everything to him.

Vanity universal.—Wherefore bethink thyself at length, O deluded world! and write over all thy school-doors, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom;" over all thy court-gates. "Let not the mighty man glory in his might;" over all thy exchanges and banks, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches." Write upon thy looking-glasses Bathsheba's motto, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain;" upon thy mews and artillery-yards, that of the Psalmist, "God delighteth not in the strength of a horse; He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man;" upon thy taverns, inns, and ale-houses, that of Solomon, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise;" upon thy magazines and wardrobes, that of our Saviour, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." Write upon thy counting-houses that of Habakkuk, "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that loadeth himself with thick clay!" thy playhouses, that of Paul, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" thy banqueting-houses, that of the same holy Apostle, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both them and it;" yea, upon all thine accommodations, that of the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities: all is vanity and vexation of spirit."[a]

a Talmud.

9–12. (9) **good reward**, in their common joy while sharing the fruits of their labour. "A man without a companion is like a left hand without a right."[a] (10) **fall**, bodily, or into any kind of distress. (11) **warm alone?** fig. is from marriage relations, but reference is to the warmth of the sympathy felt in all social ties. The miserly is ever the miserable. (12) **threefold cord**,[b] such as husband, wife, and child. Need not find allusion to the Trinity here.

b "The symbol is taken from the fact that a cord of three strands holds more firmly than one consisting of a simple strand, or of two only."—*O. Zöckler.*

Two better than one (*v.* 9).—I. Give some examples. It applies to marriage, to friendship, to useful labours, etc. II. Offer some reasons. Life is the more wholesome and pleasant for its companionships: work is easier for mutual toil; worship for blended voices: self-help aids mutual help.

"Strong alone, but stronger with others."—*Ger. Proverb.*

v. 9. *Bp. Wilkins,* 263.

Christian union.—Rev. T. L. Cuyler sketches this scene at a late Christian Convention in Brooklyn: "The Convention closed by joining hands, and singing, 'Say, brother will you meet us?' I saw one of Dr. Storr's deacons and a Quaker and a Methodist standing with clasped hands, and flanked by a Baptist and a Presbyterian clergyman. It reminded me of the time when we college students, standing thus in the chemical lecture-hall, the electric current leaped from the charged battery through the whole circle in an instant."

vv. 9–12. *G. Whitefield,* v. 107.

13, 14. (13) **better**, in the sense of happier. **child**, though

a 2 Sa. vii. 8.

he may seem despised. king, such as perhaps Sol. now felt himself to be: or such as he feared Rehoboam would prove. who . . admonished, who is so stiff and settled in his ways and opinions that he cannot be advised. (14) he, *i.e.* the poor and wise child.[a] Comp. cases of Joseph and of Jeroboam. whereas . . poor, better trans. "Although he was born poor in his kingdom."

A comparison (*v.* 13).—Such a child is better—I. In his experience. II. In his influence. III. In his prospect. Few can be kings, but many can be saints.[b]

15, 16. (15) second child, the one succeeding the aged, foolish king. "A somewhat inflated description of the dominion and adherents wh. that child had acquired." Called "second child," as one coming second, next after the king.[a] (16) come after, *i.e.* the next generation after that which sets up the youthful king.[b] This might truly be applied to Jeroboam.

Little children.—

Sporting through the forest wide;
Playing by the water side:
Wandering o'er the healthy fells;
Down within the woodland dells:
All among the mountains wild,
Dwelleth many a little child!
In the baron's hall of pride;
By the poor man's dull fireside;
'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen,
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless everywhere!
In the fair isles of the main;
In the desert's lone domain;
In the savage mountain glen;
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone;
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found!
Blessings on them! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy
With their wishes, hopes, and fears;
With their laughter and their tears;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience!
Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known,
'Mid its labours and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares;
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod—
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified—
Little children, ye abide![c]

v. 13. *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vi. 249.

b Dr. Thomas.

"Every man's life lies within the present; for the past is spent and done with, and the future is uncertain."—*Marcus Antoninus.*

a Comp. Yakoob Khan brought out of prison to succeed Shere Ali in the rule of Afghanistan, and again a prisoner.

b The popularity of kings is notoriously short-lived.

"I am fond of children. I think them the poetry of the world—the fresh flowers of our hearts and homes; little conjurers, with their 'natural magic,' evoking by their spells what delights and enriches all ranks, and equalises the different classes of society. Often as they bring with them anxieties and cares, and live to occasion sorrow and grief, we should get on very badly without them."—*T. Binney.*

"There is no kind of sinners more inconvincible and incurable than the worldly-minded. It is a rule without exception,—those sins which have the greatest appearance of reason, and the least of sensuality, are the most plausible and prevailing."—*Dr. Bates.*

c Mary Howitt.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—3. (1) keep . . God,[a] the shoes, or sandals, were removed on entering the sacred temple. The way of walking may indicate a reverent spirit. In difficult paths we need to watch every footfall. hear,[b] attend, give good heed, and obey. of fools, wh. is merely ceremonial. (2) rash, especially in Div. worship, making vows, etc.[c] few, so careful, studied, and becoming. (3) multitude of business, wh. oppressing the mind keeps it active all the night. multitude of words,[d] often the saying is true, "The more words the less sense."

Reverence for the sanctuary (*v.* 1).—I. State the duty. 1. Our duty as we enter public worship; 2. As we are engaged in it. II. Enforce the duty. 1. Impropriety of conduct in public worship is foolish; 2. Is sinful; 3. Is dangerous.[e]

Rev. S. Lavington.—The late Rev. Samuel Lavington, of Bideford, has been described as one of the most impressive preachers of his day. He was eminently devoted to the study of his Bible, and to prayer. The effect of his preaching was very strikingly exhibited at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Scaward, at Barnstaple. He introduced his discourse by using the following language:—"What a multitude is here assembled to see an ordination! Many of you were perhaps never present at such a solemnity before; and I should be very sorry if, when the assembly breaks up, you should go away with visible disappointment and say, 'Is that all?' Why, 'what came ye out for to see?' Did you expect to see a number of apostles met together to lay their hands upon the head of a young minister, and communicate to him some miraculous powers? Alas! we have them not ourselves. If we had, you should not take all this trouble for nothing. If we had, you should have something by which to remember an ordination as long as you live. If the Holy Ghost were at our command, most gladly would we lay our hands upon you all; and this assembly should be like that mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' But what we cannot command, we may humbly and earnestly supplicate. Shall I then beg the favour of you to join with me in this short ejaculation to the God of all grace?—'O God the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death, pour out Thy spirit upon all in this assembly; and command on every one of us a blessing out of Zion, even life for evermore. Amen.'" The congregation, abstracted for the moment from all other objects, forgot the order of worship, rose from their seats, joined in the collect, and then resumed their places with the greatest solemnity.

4—7. (4) vowest,[a] even if thou didst it hastily, show thy manliness in paying it, whatsoever it may cost thee. pay, Ps. lxvi. 13, 14, cxvi. 14. (5) not vow, holding back fr. relig. actions than not prove the sincerity of the action. (6) mouth . . sin, *comp.* James's Ep. for snares of the tongue. the angel, either the priest, or poss. the angel who is supposed to record all our actions. error,[b] our relig. acts should be so serious and so

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a Comp. *Newman's* verse:—"Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see," etc.

"Give thy mind to what thou art going to do."—*Spk. Com.*

b 1 Sa. xv. 22.

c Comp. Mat. vi. 7.

d "The habit of an excess of words causes the speech to degenerate into vain and senseless twaddle."—*O. Zöckler.*

Pr. x. 19.

v. 1. *J. Mede*, i. 432; *Dr. E. Maynard*, ii. 135; *Dr. T. Leland*, ii. 1; *Dr. T. Sharp*, i. 363; *Dr. J. Langhorne*, ii. 137; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 358.

v. 2. *Dr. R. South*, ii. 83; *Saurin*, viii. 397; *Bishop Lowth*, 330; *Bp. Fulford*, i. 98; *J. Williams*, 12.

e G. Brooks.

To give up the world is to give up the evil of it; but to be shut up in a cloister is not to be shut out of it. The world is everywhere.

a De. xxii. 22—24.

b "It was a thoughtlessness that I made the vow at all." Such an excuse is not weak only, but wicked. Yet this

thoughtful, that this should be felt as an unreasonable and wicked excuse. (7) dreams, *v.* 3.

Religious vows (*v.* 4).—I. Men are apt to make vows to God—1. When in trouble; 2. When conscience-smitten under the Gospel; 3. When alarmed by the near prospect of death. II. Men are apt to forget the vows they have made. 1. They yield to temptation; 2. Passing events obliterate the impression; 3. Forgotten vows were probably made in self-reliance; 4. Men should imitate the Psalmist. Compare Ps. l. 14 with Ps. lxvi. 13, 14.

Promising and performing.—The broken bowl.—Sir William Napier, when taking a long country walk in the neighbourhood of Bath, met a little peasant girl, who was crying bitterly, with a broken bowl in her hand. Sir William inquired the cause of her tears, and encouraged by his kind face and voice, she told her tale; how she had broken the bowl which had held her father's dinner, and was afraid now to go home, for she knew her mother would be very angry, and would punish her. But a sudden idea seemed to strike her, and looking up in Sir William's face, she exclaimed, "But 'ee can mend it, cannot 'ee?" "No, but he could give her sixpence to buy another." He pulled out his purse, and was dismayed to find it quite empty. He told the child, however, that if she came to the same place at the same hour next day, he would be sure to meet her and to bring a sixpence with him, and that she must tell her mother this. On reaching his home, however, Sir William found a note from a friend at Bath, inviting him to dinner next day, to meet a gentleman whom he particularly wished to see. He recollected with regret his promise to the little girl, and considered whether it might not be possible to combine the two. But he soon saw this could not be done, and refused the tempting dinner invitation, saying he had "a pre-engagement." "I could not disappoint the child," he said to his daughters; "she trusted in me so implicitly."

8—11. (8) matter, marg. will or purpose: *i.e.* at what seems a strange permission of God. Be sure that those in higher office will sooner or later take notice, and be quite sure that God will overrule it all.[a] higher, *etc.*, or trans. "High watches over high, and High Ones over them." (9) for all, the produce of the earth is the entire source of human wealth. On God's provisions in the earth kings and peoples together depend.[b] (10) loveth silver, has the lust of acquisition, wh. nothing can satisfy.[c] (11) eat them, labourers and servants. what good, a misanthropic speech.

Socrates and Charicles.—While Athens was governed by thirty tyrants, Socrates, the philosopher, was summoned to the senate-house, and ordered to go, with some other persons they named, to seize one Leon, a man of rank and fortune, whom they determined to put out of the way, that they might enjoy his estate. This commission Socrates flatly refused, and, not satisfied therewith, added his reasons for such refusal: "I will never willingly assist an unjust act." Charicles sharply replied, "Dost thou think, Socrates, to talk always in this high style, and not to suffer?" "Far from it," added he; "I expect to suffer a thousand ills, but none so great as to do unjustly."

is a characteristic evasion of superficiality and levity in religious matters.

v. 4. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 39; *T. Knowles*, iii. 197; *J. G. Foyster*, 382.

vv. 4, 5. *H. White*, 202; *J. Scott*, 49; *J. Slade*, iii. 294.

vv. 5, 6. *Dr. W. Paley*, i. 45.

v. 7. *E. Patteson*, 325; *P. Goodwin*, 154.

"Do not fear the power of the world. When a blind man runs against you in the street, you are not angry with him. You say, 'He is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me.' So you may say of the world, when they speak evil of Christ, 'They are blind.'"—*McCheyne.*

a "There is coming a capital judgment at last, and an earnest of it in partial punishment of sinners meanwhile."—*Fausset.*

b The point here is, that when rulers oppress the cultivators of the land they limit production, and so injure themselves.

c 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10.

v. 8. *Dr. H. Stebbing*, ii. 24.

v. 10. *Dr. A. Markland*, ii. 93; *Bp. Hurd*, vi. 368.

12—17. (12) labouring man, one who toils, with his hands, in the fields. He has no cares, and is weary enough to thoroughly enjoy his slumbers.[a] (13) kept, not distributed, so as to become a blessing to others. Hoarded up. (14) evil travail, thieves, etc., or unsuccessful speculations. a son, late in life perhaps. nothing, all his misused treasure having vanished. (15) naked, *etc.*, if he keep his stores all his life, he cannot take them to the grave with him.[b] (16) sore evil, he tries all his life to *keep*, and then at death must *lose*. (17) pain, of his fears and anxieties about his hoards.

The sleep of the toiler (*v.* 12).—It is sweet—1. As a rest from labour; 2. As a repairer of exhausted energy; 3. As a season of oblivion; 4. As a ground of thankfulness to Him who knows what things we have need of; 5. As a reminder of the death of the believer, and the awakening to everlasting life.

Anxieties of the rich.—In many parts of the East there are not any banks for money, or public offices, in which the affluent can deposit their riches; consequently the property must be kept in the house, or concealed in some secret place. Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that a man having great wealth should live in constant dread of its being stolen. There are those who have large treasures concealed in their houses, gardens, or fields; and, the fact being known, they are closely watched, whenever they pay special attention to any particular place or object. The late king of Kandy, after he was taken prisoner, and on his voyage to Madras, was much concerned about some of his concealed treasures, and yet he would not tell where they were. So great is the anxiety of some, arising from the jewels and gold which they keep in their frail houses, that they literally watch a great part of the night, and sleep in the day, that their golden deity may not be taken from them. I knew a man who had nearly all his wealth in gold pagodas, which he kept in a large chest in his bedroom. Neither in body nor in mind did he ever wander far from the precious treasure; his abundance hindered him from sleeping; and for a time it seemed as if it would hinder him from dying; for when that fatal moment came, he several times, when apparently gone, again opened his eyes, and again gave another look at the chest; and one of the last offices of his hands was to make an attempt to feel for the key under his pillow![c]

18—20. (18) good, *etc.*, a repetition of his very weak conclusion. (19) power to eat, in the sense of enjoying and using. (20) much remember, or think on; anxiously ponder over. Thankful to God for present good, he enjoys it, and leaves in God's hands the rest. God answereth him, approving of his acts, and giving him the joy of a quiet conscience.[a]

The nobleman's jewels.—A rich nobleman was once showing a friend a great collection of precious stones, whose value was almost beyond counting. There were diamonds, and pearls, and rubies, and gems from almost every country on the globe, which had been gathered by their possessor by the greatest labour and expense. "And yet," he remarked, "they yield me no income." His friend replied that he had two stones, which cost him but five pounds each, yet they yielded him a very considerable annual income. And he led him down to the mill, and pointed to the two toiling grey millstones. They were laboriously crushing

a "Fears for his wealth, and an overloaded stomach, without labouring, will not suffer the rich oppressor to sleep." — *Fausset.*

b Job i. 21; Ps. xlix. 17; 1 Ti. vi. 7.

v. 12. *H. Belgrave, Monitor to Families.*

vv. 13, 14. *Dr. J. Donne*, v. 506.

"Riches oftentimes, if nobody take them away, make to themselves wings and fly away; and truly, many a time the undue sparing of them is but letting their wings grow, wh. makes them ready to fly away, and the contributing a part of them to do good only clips their wings a little, and makes them stay the longer with their owner." — *Abp. Leighton.*

c *Roberts.*

a "In order to enjoy the good that there is in the riches of this world, it is necessary that one have a perfect rule over them, *i.e.* that in the use of them he may at all times act in accordance with the Divine purpose." — *Hansen.*

"A cheerful spirit is a great blessing; it makes the yoke of our employments

the grain into snowy flour, for the use of hundreds who depended on this work for their daily bread. Those two dull homely stones did more good in the world and raised a larger income than all the nobleman's jewels. So it is with idle treasure everywhere. It is doing nobody any good. While poor souls are dying of thirst, the money is hoarded and hid away which might take the water of life to them.

easy, and the burden of our afflictions light." —*Mat. Henry.*

Ec. xi. 9.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) **common,** better, it lies heavy on men: "great upon man." (2) **for his soul,** not here his spiritual nature, but his failing and craving. **not power,** *etc.*, either by bringing sickness upon him, or making his care so overwhelming that he can enjoy nothing; comp. chap. v. 19. **a stranger,** an alien, in whom he has no interest. **evil disease,** *i.e.* as bad as an evil disease.

Ill-health, ill-ease (*v.* 2).—I. We have here an illustration of a not uncommon lot in life—great wealth, etc., with little power for enjoyment. II. We are reminded that enjoyment is often marred by the misuse of what seems to provide the opportunity. III. It is suggested that this is in accordance with laws of health, and of moral government, which none can break with impunity. IV. We infer that life should be ordered by the will of God.

Note on verse 2.—There is not a repetition of the same idea in these words as might at first appear. "Wealth" is but another form of the word "weal," or "well-being," including those things which tend to the welfare of men, not merely money or other riches. In modern speech wealth has come to mean only "property," that upon which a man can place his hand. In former times many persons would have been called "wealthy" to whom we should not now apply the epithet. So when Paul, in 1 Cor. x. 24, calls upon the brethren to seek each one to promote his brother's wealth, he is far from intending to say that it should be the object of the Corinthians to make each other rich; they were to strive to promote, in every way they could, the prosperity of others, in spiritual as well as in temporal things.

A gentleman being shown through the magnificent grounds of a nobleman, said to the owner, "Well, my lord, all this and heaven would be noble; but this and hell would be terrible."

When Rothschild heard that the head of the Agnade family was dead: "How much does he leave?" he asked. "Twenty millions." "You mean eighty?" "No, twenty." "Dear me, I thought he was in easy circumstances," remarked the modern Crœsus.

3–5. (3) **days . . be many,** *Knobel* trans. "and be a great man all his years." **no burial,**[a] *i.e.* no honourable burial,[b] through the absence of all filial esteem for the mean and miserly man. **untimely birth,** wh. involves never experiencing life at all. See similar strong fig. ch. iv. 3. (4) **he,** *i.e.* the untimely birth of *v.* 3.[c] (5) **this . . other,** *i.e.* than the avaricious man, who neither knows rest in life or in death.

Soul-poverty (*v.* 3).—I. We have a case supposed—a large household, great wealth, etc. II. A possibility suggested—the soul void of good, poverty in the midst of wealth. III. A truth asserted—such a man had better not have lived; he has had his good things, he has had the toil of getting, the worry of keeping, the disappointment of leaving, and nothing to go to.

Useless riches.—Daniel Dancer.—This man was remarkable for a miserly disposition. Lady Tempest, the only person who had the least influence over him, one day prevailed on him to purchase a hat (having worn his own for thirteen years) from a Jew for a

a "For a corpse to lie unburied was a circumstance in itself of peculiar ignominy and shame." — *Spk. Com.*

b Isa. liii. 9; Je. xxii. 19.

c He is a type of the driftless existence of him who makes riches the chief good.

"The wealth of the Cretans consists in health, vigour, and courage, domestic quiet, concord, public liberty, plenty of all that is necessary, and

contempt of all that is superfluous; a habit of industry, an abhorrence of idleness, an emulation in virtue, submission to the laws, and a reverence of the gods."—*Fénelon.*

"Worldly wealth is the devil's bait; and those whose minds feed upon riches, recede, in general, from real happiness, in proportion as their stores increase; as the moon when she is fullest of light is farthest from the sun."—*Burton.*

shilling; but to her great surprise, when she called the next day, she saw that the old *chapeau* still covered his head. On inquiry, it was found that, after much solicitation, he had prevailed on old Griffiths, his servant, to purchase the hat for eighteenpence, which Mr. Dancer bought the day before for a shilling. He generally, in severe weather, lay in bed to keep himself warm; to light a fire he thought expensive, though he had £3,000 per annum, besides immense riches. He never took snuff, for that was extravagant, but he always carried a snuff-box. This probably he would fill in the course of a month by pinches obtained from others. When the box was full, he would barter the contents for a farthing candle at a neighbouring greengrocer's; this candle was made to last till the box was again full, as he never suffered any light in his house except while he was going to bed. He seldom washed his face and hands but when the sun shone forth, then he would betake himself to a neighbouring pool, and use sand instead of soap; when he was washed he would lie on his back and dry himself in the sun, as he never used a towel, for that would wear, and, when dirty, the washing was expensive.

v. 6. *G. Whitefield*, 749.

6—8. (6) **thousand years**, *etc.*, the good of long life being destroyed by the utterly selfish way of spending the long years. (7) **man**, i.e. *the* man Sol. now speaks of. **mouth**, type of sensual and selfish gratification. **appetite**, the craving excited by indulgence. (8) **knoweth . . living**, in a modest and contented style.

The quiet life.—

Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade.
In winter, fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years glide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mixed; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please.
With meditation.[a]

"Those who travel through deserts would often be at a loss for water if certain indications, which the hand of Providence has marked out, did not serve to guide them to a supply. The secret wells are, for the most part, discoverable from the verdure which is nourished by their presence. So the fruitfulness of good works of the believer, amidst the deadness and sterility around him, proclaims the Christian's life."—*Salter.*

a Pope.

9, 10. (9) **better**, this *v.* appears to answer the question pr' in *v.* 8. **sight . . eyes**, type of intellectual gratifications, which bring so much more satisfaction than merely sensual indulgences. (10) **contend . . he**, *see* ch. ix. 1; 1 Cor. x. 22.[a]

Unequal conflicts (*v.* 10).—I. This has been often illustrated in national history; the Zulu war for instance. II. Individual life, too, often supplies examples, as when one of much conceit and small knowledge is worsted in argument; as when one with small capital competes with greater capital and knowledge of trade.

a "A man cannot with the greatest riches make his part good against the arrests of sickness or death, but must yield to his fate."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 9. *J. Balguy*, i. 149.

III. Who hath fought against God and prospered? yet this war is constantly waged by the thoughtless and impenitent. IV. God in Christ offers peace.

All is vanity.—I once heard of a sagacious man, who, being on his death-bed, was solicited to leave some memorial to his friends. Unable to articulate, he made signs to have pen and ink brought to him, and with these traced two great circles, or nothings, upon a sheet of paper. After his decease, there was much speculation what these could mean. The common conjecture was, that he intended to signify that the body and the soul have their appointed circuits, and that, when these are finished, they return severally to their origin—the body to the earth, and the spirit unto God. In my opinion, however, the two ciphers must have been intended to show the nullity of all terrestrial things, just as the wisest of monarchs could find nothing but vanity and vexation in the learning, pleasures, joys, honour, wealth, and glory of the world.[b]

11, 12. (11) **things**, those detailed in the previous ch. **better**, for all the things he seeks so earnestly, and calls so good. (12) **good**, real and lasting good. **vain life**, or life of his vanity.[a]

Life.—O life, I have enjoyed thee! Not every draught from thy fountain has had a bitter taste; truly, not all upon earth is vanity, if we enjoy not the creature alone, but, in the creature, enjoy also the Creator. But that which sweetens thee do I indeed take with me; and that is, the friendship of my God, which has flowed to me through all created things, as through so many channels. Earthly channels may fail, but He knows how to provide new ones. Gone, gone, is life's enjoyment and sweetness, when we seek them in the creature only; while, on the other hand, they are ever present to those who, in the good things of this life, recognise the hand that bestows them. Thus, every day becomes a treasury and the poorest life may become a rich one. No, I do not look back upon it as mere vanity; but now, when in the silence of my chamber I survey all the past, my heart is filled with a joy which is too great for it to contain.[b]

"There is a burden of care in getting riches; fear in keeping them; temptation in using them; guilt in abusing them; sorrow in losing them; and a burden of account at last to be given up concerning them."—*Matthew Henry.*

b Gotthold.

a "One would only be justified in esteeming wealth in case he knew the future, and had it in his power. The merest chance can suddenly rob one of all that has been gathered with pain and toil. A great catastrophe may come, and sweep everything away as a flood. The practical result, therefore, is that one should strive after the true riches."—*Hengstenberg.*

b Tholuck

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1. **good name**, or good reputation; as Pr. xxii. 1. In the Heb. there is a play upon the similar words *shem*, a name, *shemen*, ointment.[a] The reader will observe the similarity bet. this part of Ecclesiastes and the Bk. of Proverbs. **better**, more to be desired.[b] **ointment**,[c] scent, or oil, which is in general use and highly valued in hot climates. **day of death**, *etc.*, comp. Phil. i. 23. Sol. by this sentence commends a serious disposition; one that takes into consideration the ending of life.[d] "To the man with a good name death is the entrance on a better life."

Two important days (*v.* 1).—For one who is prepared, the day of death is better than the day of birth. I. For in the day of birth one is clothed with a weak and frail body, while in the day of death one is clothed with the Lord from heaven. II. In the day of birth one enters a world of contention and change in-

a The Heb. words of the sentence are *Tôb shem mishḥmen tôb.*

b "The honour of virtue is really more valuable and desirable than all the wealth and pleasure in this world."—*Mat. Henry.*

c "The likeness bet. reputation and odour supplies a common metaphor; the

contrast is between reputation, as an honourable attainment wh. only wise men win, and fragrant odour as a gratification of the senses which all men enjoy."—*Spk. Com.*

d "A good and reputable name, wh. secures an ideal existence with posterity, is more valuable than all sensual pleasure."—*Elster.*

e Jowett.

vested with the helplessness and inexperience of infancy; in the day of death one is crowned with immortality, and invested with the power of an endless life. III. In the day of birth one enters on a life of sorrow; in the day of death he passes on to the whole gain of dying. IV. In the day of birth one is born to die; in the day of death one dies to live for ever.

A good name among the Druses.—Nothing is more sacred with a Druse than his public reputation. He will overlook an insult if known only to him who has offered it, and will put up with blows when his interest is concerned, provided nobody is a witness; but the slightest abuse given in public he revenges with the greatest fury. This is the most remarkable feature of the national character. In public a Druse may appear honourable, but he is easily tempted to a contrary behaviour when he has reason to think that his conduct will remain undiscovered. The ties of blood and friendship have no power among them; the son no sooner attains the years of maturity than he begins to plot against his father.*e*

2, 3. (2) **house of mourning,** or a house where there is mourning or lamentation for the dead.*a* **that . . men,** viz., the death wh. they are taking into consideration in the house of mourning.*b* **lay . . heart,** seriously ponder it, and try to learn wise lessons from the brevity of life, etc. (3) **sorrow,** not here *grief*, but rather *seriousness.*c **laughter,** regarded as the expression of thoughtless and boisterous merry-making. **sadness,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xc. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 10. "In sadness of countenance there may be a good (cheerful) heart."*d*

The house of mourning (*v.* 2).—It is better than the house of feasting, because—I. It gives better lessons. II. It has better company. III. It has better comforts. IV. A better end awaits us in the house of mourning.*e*

Reflection and absorption.—The light of comfort shines in the darkness of sorrow. To use a homely illustration, a towel, when wetted, becomes darker than before, but at the same time it becomes more transparent. In quitting one medium for another —the air for water—its power of reflecting light is diminished, but its power of absorbing light is increased, so that the darkness of the towel is due to its increased transparency. This is the case, too, with such minerals as tabasheez and hydrophane, a variety of opal, and also with table-salt and snow, which are opaque when dry, but when immersed in water become transparent. Thus it is with sanctified trial. When passing from the element of joy into the element of sorrow life is darkened, but it is made more transparent than before. It does not reflect so much gladness, but it allows us to see deeper into its true nature. . . . . By a gracious dispensation of Heaven, the loss of reflection becomes a gain of absorption.*f*

4—6. (4) **wise,** a strong way of saying that a man finds he can learn best in serious and solemn scenes. "Where he can be serious, the wise man is in his element." **fools,***a* inconsiderate men, but always in Scripture with the idea of wilfulness, leading to wickedness. (5) **rebuke,** *etc.*,*b* comp. Pr. xiii. 18, xv. 31, 32. (6) **crackling,** *etc.*, noisy for a very brief time,*c* and answering to the merriment of fools. "Quickly blazing up, with loud crackling and snapping, and also quickly consumed."

a "A good and reputable name, wh. secures an ideal existence with posterity, is more valuable than all sensual pleasure."—*Elster.*

e Jowett.

a "In the cemeteries in the neighbourhood of Cairo are many private burying grounds, each one belonging to one family; and they, if the owners be of sufficient wealth, have erected within them a house of mourning. To this the females of the family repair twice a year, and remain there for three or more days and nights."—*Gadsby.*

b The Lord Jesus taught us that times of feasting may be sanctified by giving His presence at the marriage feast in Cana.

c Comp. godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

d Maurer.

e C. Cecil.

f Dr. H. Macmillan.

a "The fool's heart is all upon it to be merry and jovial: his whole delight is in sport and gaiety, in merry stories, merry songs and merry company, merry

Crackling of thorns.—In reference to this expression it may be observed that dried cow-dung was in Palestine commonly used for fuel, as it is at the present day: but it is remarkably slow in burning: on this account the Arabs frequently threaten to burn a person with cow-dung, as a lingering death. This fuel forms a striking contrast to the short-lived and noisy violence of thorns and furze, which are speedily consumed, with the crackling noise alluded to. Roberts says, "In some places, firewood being very scarce, the people gather cow-dung, make it into cakes, and dry it in the sun, after which it is ready for fuel. This practice is alluded to in Ezekiel iv. 15. Those who are accustomed to have their food prepared in this way prefer it to any other; they tell you it is sweeter and more holy, as the fuel comes from their sacred animal."

7. oppression, Ps. lxii. 10. Perhaps here the *pressure* that is put on a wise man, as, for instance, with bribes. By this pressure he may be made mad or foolish enough to turn aside from the right. Some think the reference is to the exercise of tyrannical power by the wise.[a] **gift,** or bribe. De. xvi. 19.[b] **heart,** *i.e.* the right intentions of the heart.

Not to be bribed.—When great presents were sent to Epaminondas, the celebrated Theban general, he used to observe: "If the thing you desire be good, I will do it without any bribe, even because it is good; if it be not honest, I will not do it for all the goods in the world." He was so great a contemner of riches, that when he died he left not enough to discharge the expenses of the funeral.

8—10. (8) **better is the end,** bec. the painful uncertainties and toils are over.[a] **patient in spirit,** *comp.* N. T. Greek word, *makrothumia*, long-suffering.[b] **proud,** impatient, hasty, self-confident, unwilling to wait. (9) **angry,** better, *sensitive*, easily offended.[c] **resteth,** *comp.* Eph. iv. 26. "A fretful, irritable disposition is mainly found in fools." (10) **former . . better,** this question is still often asked, esp. as men grow old. But it is usually the sign of a peevish and repining disposition. Those who ask thus fail worthily to observe God's working in time present.

Patience and pride (*v.* 8).—I. A patient spirit is more noble than a proud spirit. 1. It sees farther; 2. Is more generous; 3. Suffers less humiliation. II. A patient spirit is more advantageous than a proud spirit. 1. It produces wise counsel; 2. It maintains strong and lasting friendships; 3. It ensures constant co-operation in any good work; 4. It brings about influence and honour for its possessor. III. The patient spirit is more Christ-like than the proud. See Jesus—1. Before the proud; 2. With the proud.[d]

J. Bradford and J. Wesley.—Joseph Bradford was for some years the travelling companion of Mr. Wesley, for whom he would have sacrificed health and even life, but to whom his will would never bend, except in meekness. "Joseph," said Mr. Wesley, one day, "take these letters to the post." *B.* "I will take them after preaching, sir." *W.* "Take them now, Joseph." *B.* "I wish to hear you preach, sir; and there will be sufficient time for the post after service." *W.* "I insist upon your going now, Joseph." *B.* "I will not go at present." *W.* "You

days and merry nights. This is his folly, and it helps to make him more and more foolish."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Illus. fr. case of Rehoboam, I Ki. xii. 6—15.

c "Our boatman's boy always had to go on shore, and gather sticks, thorns, doura-straw, rubbish—anything he could lay his hands upon, for boiling the men's pot. But these dried thorns, etc., though they make a great noise for a time, soon burn out, and are then quiet enough."—*Gadsby.*

a This may be illustrated in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, Da. iv. 25.

b "Sometimes in Egypt bribes are taken from both plaintiff and defendant; and the decision is given in favour of him who pays the highest."—*Lane.*

a "Fair beginnings (like Solomon's) are often belied by what comes after."—*Wordsworth.*

"In a subordinate sense this prov. is one of practical and political prudence, and recommends quickness of despatch, and is a warning against tedious prolixity and desultory speaking."—*Lord Bacon.*

"It is better quietly to wait the course of an affair until its issue, and not to judge and act until then, than to proceed rashly, and with passionate haste, and

bring upon oneself its bad consequences."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Col. i. 11; Heb. vi. 12, 15; Jas. v. 7, 8.

c Comp. Rehoboam, 1 Ki. xii. 13. "That will break a proud man's heart which will not break a humble man's sleep."—*Mat. Henry.*

d Stems and Twigs.

won't?" *B.* "No, sir." *W.* "Then you and I must part." *B.* "Very good, sir." The good men slept over it. Both were early risers. At four o'clock the next morning the refractory helper was accosted with, "Joseph, have you considered what I said—that we must part?" *B.* "Yes, sir." *W.* "And must we part?" *B.* "Please yourself, sir." *W.* "Will you ask my pardon, Joseph?" *B.* "No, sir." *W.* "You won't?" *B.* "No, sir." *W.* "Then I will ask yours, Joseph." Poor Joseph was instantly melted: smitten as by the word of Moses, when forth gushed the tears, like the water from the rock. He had a tender soul: and it was soon observed when the appeal was made to the heart instead of the head.

11, 12. (11) **with an inheritance**, marg. "as good as an inheritance." The rest of the verse should read. "yea, better, to them that see the sun:" *i.e.* to the living. (12) **defence**, or shadow. Those who have wisdom are as well defended as those that have money; and, beyond this, wisdom has its own special advantages. **giveth life**, animates him. Money may be a blessing on a man's circumstances: wisdom is an additional blessing to the man himself.[a]

The soldier's shield.—Samuel Proctor was trained up in the use of religious ordinances, and in early life felt some religious impressions. He afterwards enlisted as a soldier in the first regiment of foot guards, and was made a grenadier. Notwithstanding this, the impressions made upon his mind continued; and the fear of the Lord, as a guardian angel, attended him through the changing scenes of life. There were a few in the regiment who met for pious and devotional exercises: he cast in his lot among them, and always carried a small pocket Bible in one pocket and his hymn-book in the other. He took part in the struggle on the plains of Waterloo in 1815. In the evening of June 16, in the tremendous conflict on that day, his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a wood of which they had taken possession, and from which they annoyed the allied army. While thus engaged he was thrown a distance of four or five yards by a force on his hip, for which he could not account at the time; but when he came to examine his Bible he saw, with overwhelming gratitude to the Preserver of his life, what it was that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck his hip where his Bible rested in his pocket, and penetrated nearly half through that sacred book. All who saw the ball said that it would undoubtedly have killed him had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield. The Bible was kept as a sacred treasure, and laid up in his house, like the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle. "That Bible," said Proctor, "has twice saved me instrumentally—first, from death in battle, and second, from death eternal."[b]

13, 14. (13) **work of God**, orderings of Divine Providence.[c] **straight**, *etc.*, for the mystery of Providence is that some things appear to us to be *made* crooked.[b] (14) **joyful**, prosperous times are sent for our gladdening, and it is proper to rejoice in them. **consider**, bec. adverse times are just as truly sent to lead to seriousness and review. **one . . other**, *i.e.* wisely proportioned them, and fitted them together in every life.[c]

Themes for the day of adversity (*v.* 14).—I. Some themes for

Pr. viii. 11, xvi. 16; 2 Ti. iii. 15.

vv. 11, 12. *Abp. Dawes*, i. 103.

v. 12. *Dr. A. Gerard*, i. 453; *H. Melvill*, 23.

b D. Cheever.

a "Consider that every work of God is wise, just, and good, and there is an admirable beauty and harmony in His works, and all will appear at last to have been

saints in the day of adversity. 1. Consider who sends the adversity; 2. Why it is sent: 3. What you have in the day of adversity; 4. What you shall be after the day of adversity; 5. What you need now to glorify God. II. Some themes for sinners in the day of adversity. Consider—1. The joys you have had; 2. What you deserve; 3. Whence your adversity comes; 4. The infinitely greater adversity of lost souls; 5. That Jesus is willing to save in this day of adversity.[d]

Two mourners.—Early in life (says a lady in South Carolina) I became interested in tracts; but it was not until a season of affliction that I realised their value. A dear friend was taken from me by death, and my soul was disquieted within me, when a female acquaintance to whom, when in affliction, I had once sent the *Friendly Visit to the House of Mourning*, returned the same tract to me. I had before read it as applicable to others, but now, as addressed to myself; and I humbly trust I was thereby enabled to view the goodness of my heavenly Father, even in the bitterness of my cup, and to say from the heart, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth to Him good." The same tract was, some years since, presented by my revered father, on paying his bill, to the landlady of a house where we put up for the night. Calling afterwards at the same inn, the landlady, on hearing my name, invited me into her sitting-room, told me of her receiving the tract, and that at the time it was presented to her she had just been called to bury a beloved daughter, and was weeping over her loss in all the anguish of that sorrow which "worketh death." At first she was only anxious to know to whom she was indebted for the tract; but curiosity soon led her to examine the gift itself, and God blessed it to her conviction, her conversion, and her lasting consolation: indeed, she never parted with it but when some friend or neighbour was in affliction.

15, 16. (15) **all things**, *i.e.* all sorts of things. **days . . vanity**, such as he gives account of in previous chapters, when he was trying all possible experiences. **just**, *etc.*, this mysterious association of righteousness and misfortune can be seen in every age. It is the bewilderment of Asaph and of Job. (16) **righteous over much**, "a warning against that strictly exact but hypocritical and external righteousness of those predecessors of the Pharisees to whom the preceding *v.* referred."[a] Do not think thou canst grasp and apprehend these mysteries.[b] **destroy thyself**, as *v.* 15, "perisheth," etc.

Righteous over much (*v.* 16).—I. What is the real import of this passage? The thing condemned here is evidently not having too much righteousness, but estimating our righteousness more highly than we ought, and priding ourselves in and boasting of that which we really do not possess. II. What all of us should learn from the subject before us. 1. The importance of obtaining proper views of our own righteousness; 2. Rightly to appreciate the righteousness of Christ: 3. To pray that we may be made in every respect what God would have us be.[c]

Hugo Grotius.—Hugo Grotius was born at Delft, April 10, 1583, and had the best masters to direct his education. He was distinguished from his earliest years by the great brilliancy of his parts, and his application was equally remarkable. At eight years of age he composed Latin elegiac verses; and at fourteen he maintained public theses in mathematics, law, and philosophy,

for the best."—*Mat. Henry.*

De. viii. 2, 5; Ro viii. 28.

b "In observing the works of God thou wilt find that His influence is eternal and immutable; for who can harmonise the defects and imperfections of human life decreed by Him?"—*O. Zöckler.*

c "This mixture of good and evil days is by the Div. prov. so proportioned, that it sufficiently justifies the dealings of God towards the sons of men, and obviates all our discontent and murmuring against Him."—*Bp. Bull.*

d Stems and Twigs.

a O. Zöckler.

b "The suggestion that these *vv.* are intended to advocate a middle course between sin and virtue is at variance with the whole ten or of the book."—*Spk. Com.*

"Poss. Sol. is delivering a precept against straining any one virtue to extremes."—*Wordsworth.*

"If you see a man rigorous and severe with regard to the sins of his brethren, so as not to make charitable allowances, and to extend pardon to them, you may presume that man to be righteous over much

Not to recognise human weakness, and to make allowance for it, is *inhuman justice.*" —*S. Jerome.*

v. 15. *Dr. T. Fuller, Com. on Matt.; Dr. R. Fiddes*, iii. 347; *Dr. W. Claggett*, iii. 124; *A. Fuller*, 512.

c W. Snell.

with general applause. His reputation by this time was established, and he was mentioned by the principal scholars of the age as a prodigy of learning and as destined to make a conspicuous figure in the republic of letters. In 1598 he accompanied Barnevelt, ambassador extraordinary of the Dutch States, in a journey to France, where he was introduced to Henry IV., who was so pleased with his learning that he presented him with his picture and a gold chain. While in France he took the degree of Doctor of Laws. The following year he commenced practice as an advocate, and pleaded his first cause at Delft. In the same year, though then only seventeen, he was chosen historiographer to the United Provinces, in preference to several learned men who were candidates for that office.

a Pr. x. 27; Ps. lv. 23; Job xv. 32, xxii. 16.

v. 17. *J. Martineau*, i. 333.

"A hare and tortoise engaged to run a race; but the hare, depending on the swiftness of his foot, delayed in starting off upon the proposed race so long that the tortoise reached the goal, and won the prize through its perseverance, though slow in its motions." —*John Bate.*

b Bib. Treasury.

17, 18. (17) **over much wicked,** maliciously wicked. All are wicked from frailty, some are wicked in wilfulness. Such cannot escape the due penalties. **die . . time,** sinful indulgence surely shortening life.[a] (18) **take . . this,** *i.e.* this counsel. And the "fear of God" is the only sufficient security from both extremes, of self-righteousness and self-indulgence.

The warning despised.—A minister in the neighbourhood of Birmingham recently stated, in one of his discourses, the following fact. A deacon of a Christian church was walking, one Sabbath day, to the house of God, when he saw a young man, with whom he had some slight acquaintance, come out of an inn and mount his horse. "Can you tell me, deacon," said he, jocosely, "how far it is to hell?" The deacon paused, reflected for a moment, then replied, "It is not far off. You may come to it sooner than you expect." The young man laughed, put spurs to his horse, and was soon out of sight. The deacon walked gently on, and as the road made a turn saw a crowd before him. Coming up to the spot, he saw the young man to whom he had just before spoken the words of warning, lying a corpse upon the ground. His horse had become restive and unmanageable, and thrown his rider, who, falling on his head, was killed upon the spot.[b]

vv. 19, 20. *Dr. R. Gell, Essay*, 761.

v. 20. *Luther, Op.* i 154; *T. Boston*, ii. 374.

"The true law of the race is progress and development. Whenever civilisation panses in the march of conquest, it is overthrown by the barbarian." —*Simms.*

a Whitecross.

19, 20. (19) **strengtheneth,** *etc.*, Pr. xxi. 22, xxiv. 5; Eccl. ix. 13—16. (20) **for,** should be, *but.* **just,** a perfectly righteous, or perfectly wise, see *v.* 16. **sinneth not,** *comp.* Ro. iii. 9—18; 1 Jno. i. 8.

Dying like a Christian.—Anne de Montmorency, constable of France, having been mortally wounded at an engagement, was exhorted by those who stood around him to die like a good Christian, and with the same courage which he had shown in his lifetime. To this he most nobly replied in the following manner:—Gentlemen and fellow-soldiers! I thank you all very kindly for your anxious care and concern about me: but the man who has been enabled to endeavour to live well for fourscore years past can never need to seek now how to die well for a quarter of an hour. But observe, my having been enabled to endeavour to live well, is not the ground of my dependence; no, my sole dependence is on Jesus Christ. It is by the grace of God, through Him, that I now am what I am."[a]

21, 22. (21) **take,** *etc.*, counsel based on the consideration that all are sinners. Many things will be said by imperfect folk which you will be wiser not to hear or heed.[a] Do not be curious to hear how people judge thee. "A warning against idle curiosity,

a "As therefore thou, being far from perfectly 'just' thyself, hast much to be

and latent desire of praise." (22) cursed others,[b] spoken evil of. The sense of our own frailty should ever make us considerate towards others.

A quid pro quo.—A lady being visited with a violent disorder, was under the necessity of applying for medical assistance. Her doctor being a gentleman of great latitude in his religious sentiments, endeavoured, in the course of his attendance, to persuade his patient to adopt his creed, as well as to take his medicines. He frequently insisted, with a considerable degree of dogmatism, that repentance and reformation were all that either God or man could require of us, and that consequently there was no necessity for an atonement by the sufferings of the Son of God. As this was a doctrine the lady did not believe, she contented herself with following his medical prescriptions, without embracing his creed. On her recovery, she forwarded a note to the doctor, desiring the favour of his company to tea when it suited his convenience, and requestiug him to make out his bill. In a short time he made his visit, and the tea-table being removed, she addressed him as follows :—"My long illness has occasioned you a number of journeys ; and I suppose, doctor, you have procured my medicines at considerable expense." The doctor acknowledged that "good drugs were not to be obtained but at a very high price." Upon which she replied, "I am extremely sorry that I have put you to so much labour and expense, and also promise that, on any future indisposition, I will never trouble you again. So you see I both repent and reform." The doctor, immediately shrugging up his shoulders, exclaimed, "That will not do for me." "The words of the wise are as goads."[c]

23, 24. (23) proved, or found out. This is some of the fruit of his dearly-bought experience. wise, he wanted to be perfectly, absolutely wise ; but this was beyond attainment. (24) that . . far off, *viz.*, the very innermost essence of wisdom.[a]

A man saved from drowning by a child.—A very gallant action was recently performed at Herne Bay, by a child aged nine years, the son of Colonel Munro, of the Bower, Maidstone. He and a younger brother had gone down to bathe, and saw a man in the water, who had sunk once. The little fellow was not at first aware he could not swim, but when he perceived the man in danger, and about to sink the second time, he bravely rushed into the water, and swam to his assistance. The man immediately caught at him, and both would have been involved in the same destruction had not the child had the presence of mind to dive, and thus escape his grasp ; then approaching more cautiously he dexterously seized him by the arm and dragged him ashore. The persons present speak with admiration of the prompt and cool manner in which the little fellow acted, and affirm that but for his intrepidity the man must inevitably have been drowned, as his situation previously had been unnoticed from the shore.

25, 26. (25) the reason, to get an insight into the inner meaning and purpose of things good and bad. "The right estimation of things." (26) I find, *etc.*, Pr. xxii. 14.[a] pleaseth God, the God-fearing and just men.

A bow drawn at a venture.—"About twenty years ago," says Dr. Wisner, "I was called, in the providence of God, to preach a sermon in a village a little more than twenty miles from where I

forgiven by God, do not take too strict account, *as the self-righteous do*, of words spoken against thee by others."—*Fausset.*

"The wisdom of the Creator has given us two ears, and only one tongue, in order to teach us that we must hear twice before we speak once."—*Starke.*

"Pompey showed his wisdom and magnanimity when the papers of his enemy Sertorius were brought to him, by ordering them all to be burnt."—*Ld. Bacon.*

b 1 Ki. ii. 44.

v. 21. *D. Sturmy*, 145; *Bp. Hurd*, vi. 407.

c Whitecross.

a Ro. xi. 33.

"The books wh. once we valued more than the apple of the eye we have quite exhausted. What is that but saying that we have come up with the point of view which the universal mind took through the eyes of one scribe; we have been that man, and have passed on."—*Emerson.*

a "Thevenot says there is a custom amongst the Arabs, in some parts, of sending out, in a way where travellers are expected, a handsome wo-

man, in tears, and with her hair dishevelled. The passing traveller pities her, takes her behind him on his beast; then she throws a cord about his neck and strangles him, or holds him until the robbers come."—*Gadsby.*

Comp. 1 Ki. xi. 1—8; Pr. ii. 16—19, v. 3, *etc.*

"Now, by St. Paul, the work goes bravely on."—*Colley Cibber.*

was then settled. I preached from Rev. iii. 20: 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.' After pointing out some of the ways in which Christ knocked at the doors of sinners, I remarked that He was then knocking at the door of that young man who had recently been bereaved of a beloved parent, and inquired whether he would then listen to the Saviour, and open the door. I did not at that time know that there had been any recent bereavement in the congregation, but twenty years afterwards, at a meeting of Synod, one of the elders from that church came to me, and with deep emotion informed me that the remark to which I have alluded was to his soul 'a nail in a sure place, fixed by the Master of assemblies.' He was, at the time of my preaching, mourning the loss of a beloved mother; and when I unwittingly alluded to his case, and inquired whether he would listen to Christ's voice and open the door, his heart responded 'I will,' and there, in his seat in the house of God, the Saviour came 'in unto him,' and filled his soul with joy and peace, according to His gracious promise."

27—29. (27) **one by one,** *i.e.* weighing and considering each separately. (28) **one man,** "whose good qualities satisfy expectations." **woman,** *etc.*, it appears that, at the present day, the immodesty, ignorance, and degradation of the women in Eastern harems is painful to contemplate.[a] (29) **upright,** Ge. i. 27. **inventions,**[b] tricks, conceits, evil artifices. No reference is intended to scientific inventions and discoveries.

Alarm to distillers (*v.* 29).—I. The business of distilling confers no benefits on your fellow-men. II. It is not only useless, but it is the occasion of many and great evils. III. It destroys to a great extent the bounties of Providence. IV. By continuing this destructive business you greatly offend the virtuous and respectable part of the community. V. You pursue a pernicious calling in opposition to great light. VI. Perseverance in this business must necessarily be at the expense of your own reputation and that of your posterity. VII. By prosecuting it in a day of light and reform you peculiarly offend God, and endanger your immortal interests.[c]

The deceitfulness of sin.—We have heard of a singular tree that forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. It is called the "Judas tree." The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects, and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth. Beneath this enticing tree the earth is strewed with the victims of its fatal fascinations. That fatal plant that attracts only to destroy is a vivid emblem of the deceitfulness and deadliness of sin. For the poison of sin's bewitching flowers there is but one remedy. It is found in the "leaves of the tree of life" that groweth on Mount Calvary.[d]

[a] Both *Burckhardt* and *Lane* give the women of Cairo a sad character for immorality; and no wonder, considering the surroundings in which they are educated, and the evil influence of the system of polygamy.

[b] "Man has visibly lost his way, and feels in himself some relics of a happy state fr. wh. he is fallen, and wh. he cannot recover. He seeks it everywhere with restlessness, and unsuccessfully in impenetrable darkness."—*Pascal.*

[c] *B. Dickinson, M.A.*

[d] *Dr. Cuyler.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **who . . man?** whatever be the outward circumstances, Sol. intimates that the wise man has the best of it. **interpretation,** has some insight into the meaning of things.[a] **face to shine,** as with the smiles of serenity. **boldness,** better, *severity*, or *gloom*, or *anxiety*.[b] (2) **oath of God,** oath of allegiance taken at the king's accession. Kings were regarded as God's anointed. "An oath of God is an oath made with an appeal to God as witness." (3) **hasty . sight,** do not in sudden anger break away from allegiance. **stand not,** *i.e.* do not persist in.[c] **whatsoever,** *etc.*, the Eastern king is independent and uncontrolled.

Be prompt.—Preparation for eternity must be now, at once, and in advance of the danger. The fable of the wild boar and the fox teaches us this lesson:—Once upon a time, a wild boar of the jungle was whetting his tusks against the trunk of a tree. A fox passing by asked him why he did this, seeing that neither hunter nor hound was near. "True!" said the boar, "but when that danger does arise, I shall have something else to do than to sharpen my weapons!" Was it not very true?—On a wild coast of Britain there are tall and craggy cliffs, which overhang the ocean. The people residing near make their livelihood by gathering the eggs of the rock-birds. An iron is fixed in the cliff above; a rope is attached, and the adventurer lowers himself, until he arrives at the ledge of the rock. In this he encounters many dangers. Once a man found the rock to overhang so much that he was obliged to swing himself to and fro, so as to gain his foothold on the rock. He succeeded; but in doing so he lost the rope from his grasp. The rope swung to and fro—its vibrations becoming less and less, and each time more and more distant. The man stood, and quick as thought reasoned thus with himself:—"That rope is my only chance of life. In a little while it will be for ever beyond my reach. It is nearer now than it ever will be again. I must lay hold of it or die!" So saying, promptitude nerved his strength; he sprang from the cliff as the rope was next approaching, caught it, and was safe! This is just our state of peril by reason of our sin. There are opportunities now; and, for aught we know, they may be gradually diminishing. Come now. Lay hold on your hope now! Be prompt, and "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest."

4, 5. (4) **what doest thou?** none may resist the king's arbitrary power, or object to his commands. (5) **feel . . thing,** be influenced by no seditious or rebellious schemes. **time and judgment,** for influencing the king, and securing the due modification of his schemes. There is no intended reference here to the doctrine of a general judgment.

Obedience and its reward.—A man who had been accustomed to go with the cars on week-days informed his wife that he had been requested to go with the cars on the Sabbath. She replied, "I take it for granted that you do not intend to go." Such was her confidence in her husband that he would not do a wicked

[a] "Can solve the problem of God's dispensations with a nation."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Comp. Da. viii. 23.

"That repulsive harshness and stiffness of the features wh. are a necessary result of a coarse, unamiable and selfish heart. It is the civilising, softening, and morally refining influence of true wisdom on the soul of man that the author has in view."—*O. Zöckler.*

[c] "In presence of a king it is proper to appear modest and yet firm, to show ourselves neither over timid nor obstinate towards him."—*Ewald.*

v. 2. Dr. J. Jeffrey, i. 159; *E. Beeston*, 125.

"Let us labour for that larger and larger comprehension of truth, that more and more thorough repudiation of error, which shall make the history of mankind a series of ascending developments."—*Horace Mann.*

"As for my death, I bless God I feel and find so much inward joy and comfort to my soul, that if I were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life, if it

may stand with the holy will of God." — *Edward Dering.*

"The progress from infancy to boyhood is imperceptible. In that long dawn of the mind we take but little heed. The years pass by us, one by one, little distinguishable from each other. But when the intellectual sun of our life is risen, we take due note of joy and sorrow."—*Barry Cornwall.*

a Bib. Treasury.

a "A heavy misfortune visits him as a well-deserved punishment, and he falls a victim of his foolish effort to struggle against the Divinely-sanctioned ordinances of this world."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Bacon said—'Time is the greatest of innovators.' He might also have said, 'the greatest of improvers.' And I like Madame de Staël's observation on this subject quite as well as Lord Bacon's. It is this—'That past which is so presumptuously brought forward as a precedent for the present was itself founded on an alteration of some past that went before it."—*Colton.*

b Dr. J. Watts.

a This entire clause from *v.* 2 prob. concerns disobedience and disloyalty towards authority.

thing for money. He told her that if he should not go he might lose his place, that he had no other employment, the times were hard, and he had a family to support. "I know it," said she; "but I hope you will not forget that if a man cannot support a family by keeping the Sabbath, he certainly cannot support them by breaking it,"—a sentence which ought to be written in letters of gold, and held up to the view of all Christendom. "I am very glad," said the man, "that you think so; I think so myself. That was what I wanted—to see whether we think alike." He told the superintendent that he liked his situation, and should be very sorry to lose it, but that he could not go with the mail on the Sabbath; that he wished to attend public worship, and go with his children to the Sabbath school. He did not lose his place, nor did he suffer in a pecuniary point of view. He prospered more than before, an dlived to bear his testimony not only to the duty, but to the utility, even for this world, of keeping the Sabbath.*a*

6, 7. (6) **misery of man,** *i.e.* of the man who, neglecting to take the right time and the right way, opposes the king's will, and so rouses the king's anger.*a* (7) **when,** or how. He does not wisely estimate the consequences of his rebellious action.

Life and death.—Death was to the Romans the end of sensation and pleasure; yet, instead of regarding the emblems of it with aversion, they rather sought in them a higher relish for present enjoyment. A skeleton was not unfrequently introduced among the guests at festive parties, with the exhortation,—"*Viramus dum licet esse bene*"—"Let us enjoy life while we may." It is related of the Egyptians, by Herodotus and others, that in order to prevent irregularities at their convivial meetings, and to give some check to excessive mirth, they were used to bring into the room after supper, when they began their wine, the image of a dead man carved in wood, or a coffin, probably containing the embalmed remains of some ancestor of the family. This spectacle was presented to each of the company by a person whose office it was to pronounce distinctly the following words: "Look upon this, and be merry: for such as this, when dead, shalt thou be." A strange ceremony this! It shows, however, in what abhorrence this very extraordinary people held those extravagances which too often disgrace public and domestic festivities. Solomon was a wise and good man: he knew what danger young people were exposed to, especially on these occasions. Nor can we do them a kinder office than to whisper in their ear these memorable words of his, when they are thus tempted to excess: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth: and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."*b*

8, 9. (8) **to retain the spirit,** when it is passing fr. the body in what we call death (Job xiv. 5). **no discharge,** seldom any for the soldier when called to the battle; none for the man when called to die. So man is wholly dependent on God. His life is wholly in God's hands. There may, however, still be reference to the anger of the king, wh. commands the

execution of the over-bold servant, and will by no means change his purpose.[a] (9) to his own hurt, should be, to his hurt; *i.e.* to the injury of the subject.

The contemplation of human life (*v.* 9).—I. This contemplation of human life should be with reference to God. II. With reference to the object of forming a true estimate of human nature. III. With reference to the illustration and confirmation of religious belief. IV. With reference to the faithful correction of ourselves. V. Think of what men are doing under the sun, and what they will be doing, ere long, somewhere else.[b]

10, 11. (10) wicked, here, wicked rulers. place . . holy, *i.e.* the seat of authority and judgment. Though buried with much show, their memory was not cherished.[a] (11) speedily, immediately upon the sentence being pronounced. Long-suffering patience is presumed on by those whose hearts are evil.[b] "A very common reason for the increase of crime and wickedness." Ro. ii. 4, 5; 2 Pe. iii. 8, 9.

The abuse of Divine forbearance (*v.* 11).—I. Sin is deservedly called an evil work; it degrades and defiles the soul; there is a sentence recorded against it. II. Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; if it were, this would cease to be a state of probation—God would be the destroyer rather than the governor of the world. III. The depravity of man turns Divine clemency into presumption. 1. Solomon does not draw the reflection from a few single instances: 2. Nothing can be more vile or base than this abuse; 3. Be assured nothing will be more fatal.[c]

Neglect and its consequences.—During the eighty years' war, which resulted in the triumphant establishment of the "United Netherlands," the city of Antwerp was besieged by the Spaniards, under the celebrated Prince of Parma. The possession of that city was the turning point in the war, as far as the southern provinces (now Belgium) were concerned. Parma had nearly gained possession, by constructing, at vast outlay, a bridge across the river Scheldt. To blow up that bridge was the aim of the Protestant forces within the beleagured city. Accordingly, two fire-ships, loaded with all manner of combustibles and terrible explosives, were floated down towards the bridge during the darkness of the night. As soon as the "hell-burners" (as the Dutchmen styled them) blew the bridge to atoms, a rocket was to be sent up, and the heavily armed Dutch fleet lying below were to force their way through and bring relief and triumph into Antwerp. Had that signal been made the city would have been delivered, the Spaniards driven out of the Low Countries, fifty years of bloody war prevented, and, probably, all Belgium would have been to this day a part of Protestant Holland. The weary patriots on the wharves of Antwerp heard the tremendous explosion of the fire-ships, and anxiously watched for the rising of the rocket. But, alas! as Motley tells us in his brilliant narrative of the scene, "that rocket never rose!" And after the lapse of three centuries, it is difficult to restrain the bitter indignation which follows every mention of that stupid Dutch admiral, who failed to make the simple signal at the critical moment.[d]

12, 13. (12) prolonged, with a Divine patience and long-

v. 8. *D. Sturmy*, 286; *Dr. W. Cooper*, i. 393; *W. J. E. Bennett*, i. 323.

v. 9. *J. Foster*, ii. 16.

b J. Foster.

a "Their being at last overtaken by death and oblivion, shows their lot also to be vanity."—*Spk. Com.*

Wordsworth refers in illustration to the death of Jeroboam.

b "They see not the smoke of the pit, therefore they dread not the fire."—*South.* "Because a vicious man escapes at present, he is apt to draw false conclusions from it, and from the delay of God's punishments in this life, either to conceive them at so remote a distance, or perhaps so uncertain, that, though he has some doubtful misgivings of the future, yet he hopes, in the main, that his fears are greater than his danger."—*Sterne.*

c W. Jay.

"We are never present with, but always ourselves. Fear, desire, and hope are still pushing us on toward the future."—*Montaigne*

d Dr. Cuyler.

a Ps. xxxvii. 11,

18—20; Is. iii. 10, 11.

b Job xiv. 2; Ps. cii. 11, cix. 23.

"When the Orientals wish to pay you a very high compliment, they say, 'May your shadow never decline,' or incline rather, it should be. That is,—'May you live for ever;' for if the shadow does not incline, life must continue."—*Gadsby.*

v. 12. *J. Saurin*, i. 287; *R. W. Dibden*, 177.

v. 13. *R. Walker*, iv. 151.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

"The mind naturally makes progress, and the will naturally clings to objects; so that for want of right objects it will attach itself to wrong ones."—*Pascal.*

a Ps. lxxiii. 14.

"Since the unequal distribution of human destiny points to the futile character of all earthly occurrences and conditions, we must so much the more enjoy present happiness, and profit by it with a contented mind."—*O. Zöckler.*

"The equality of result for the evil and just is only an *external* and *partial* one. To those whom God loves everything must be for the best, and the final issue separates

suffering that may seem to be inexplicable. **well . . God**, however things may look, and however they may feel, this is his assurance.[a] The righteous will surely come off best, *in the long run*. (13) **a shadow**,[b] where there is but a brief sunsetting, the shadows pass very swiftly. **feareth . . God**, the underlying teaching of this book is that it is every way better, for this life, to fear and serve God: see ch. xii. 13.

Five fears (*v.* 12).—There is—I. The fear caused by an awakening conscience. II. The fear of anxiety. III. A fear which works caution. IV. The fear of jealousy. V. The fear which is felt when we have had Divine manifestations.[c]

God's unerring judgment.—There will be no error in the judgment pronounced by God at the great day of account: no after discoveries of individual character and conduct which, if previously known, would have reversed the decision. There is an instructive legend illustrative of this thought connected with the interesting village of Beddgelert, in North Wales, from which the village takes its name. The legend is this: "There was a certain nobleman who had an only son; he had also a favourite hound. As he entered his dwelling one day, the dog met him with his jaws stained with blood. The father proceeded to the room where he expected to find his child, but the child was not there. Immediately he thought that the dog had slain his child. He raised the weapon that was in his hand, and destroyed the dog on the spot. As he passed into the house to inquire further, he found that the faithful dog had stood between his child and a wolf; and in combat with the wolf—successful combat—had been thus besprinkled with blood—not the blood of the child, but of his foe. The child had been saved by the hound. The remorse he felt at having so recompensed the fidelity of the animal, at having thus taken away the faithful creature's life, led him to build in the village a tomb to the dog's memory; and the village is called the grave of Gelert."

14, 15. (14) **just . . wicked**,[a] so far as our present observation is concerned, there appears to be an unequal distribution of rewards and punishments; and this suggests "the inequality of God's justice." (15) **mirth**, or a bright and cheerful enjoyment of present things. "He would have us cheerfully to enjoy what God has given us in the world, to be content with it, and to make the best of it."[b] **abide with him**, a man may *keep* a cheerful disposition under all changes of outward circumstances.

Facetiousness.—Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation (harmless, I say,—that is, not intrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace). For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require. And if jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds, being tired and cloyed with graver occupations; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good-humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society, then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our

hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason; seeing also they may be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but to improve and profit the mind, rousing and quickening it, yea, sometimes enlightening and instructing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular expression? It would surely be hard, that we should be tied ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain (to be always sadly dumpish, or seriously pensive), that all divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should be shut out of conversation: and how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts, how can we be more ingenuously cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than by thus sacrificing to the Graces, as the ancients called it? Are not some persons always, and all persons sometimes, uncapable otherwise to divert themselves, than by such discourses? Shall we, I say, have no recreation? or must our recreations be ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rustical efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for everything, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish? Facetiousness, therefore, in such cases, and to such purposes, may be allowable.[c]

16, 17. (16) business, with special reference to the anxious search of men after happiness, and after the perfect knowledge. seeth sleep, or enjoyeth sleep. Extreme anxiety and care will prevent sleep. Sol. prob. gives his own personal experience. (17) cannot find out,[a] so as to explain all the irregularities and mysteries. "Our ignorance is the proper answer to many things wh. are called objections against religion."

Warren Hastings.—On one bright summer day, the boy, then just seven years old, lay on the bank of the rivulet which flows through the old domain of his house to join the Isis. There, as threescore and ten years later he told the tale, rose in his mind a scheme which, through all the turns of his eventful career, was never abandoned. He would recover the estate which had belonged to his fathers. He would be Hastings of Daylesford. This purpose, formed in infancy and poverty, grew stronger as his intellect expanded and as his fortune rose. He pursued his plan with that calm but indomitable force of will which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. When, under a tropical sun, he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, his hopes, amidst all the cares of war, finance, and legislation, still pointed to Daylesford. And when his long public life, so singularly chequered with good and evil, with glory and obloquy, had at length closed for ever, it was to Daylesford that he retired to die.[b]

the evil from the good."—*Hengstenberg.*

b Mat. Henry.

v. 14. *R. Adams*, 78; *Dr. N. Carter*, 235.

"It is wonderful how soon a piano gets into a log hut on the frontier. You would think they found it under a pine stump. With it comes a Latin grammar; and one of those tow-head boys has writ a hymn on Sunday. Now let colleges, now let senates take heed: for here is one who, opening these fine tastes on the basis of the pioneer's iron constitution, will gather all their laurels in his strong hands."—*Emerson.*

c Dr. J. Barrow.

a Ps. cxlvii. 5; Ro. xi. 33.

"There is no fuller statement in Ecc. of the incapacity of every man with his finite understanding to comprehend the plans and operations of the Infinite and Eternal God."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 16, 17. *Bp. Butler*, 168.

b Macaulay.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—3. (1) **in the hand of God**, *i.e.* they are wholly dependent on Him, they are not able to control, and shape as they please, their own life. **love or hatred,**[a] *i.e.* either the love or hatred of God towards him, as these may be intimated in his outward circumstances: in prosperity or adversity. Omit *by* and *that is*, and read last clause, *all are before them*, i.e. all are yet to be found out. (2) **all . . alike to all**, this is only superficially true. It is only true of the common earthly conditions. (3) **heart . . evil**, *i.e.* the common lot, and the certainty of death, Sol. thinks have a demoralising influence.[b]

A state of sin a state of madness (*v.* 3).—A state of sin is a state of madness. For in sin as in madness—1. Reason is dethroned; 2. There are strange hallucinations; 3. There is a wild disregard of counsel; 4. There is a perverse tendency to suspect the sanity of others; 5. There is an irrepressible impulse to inflict injury; 6. There is a strong propensity to self-destruction.[c]

The heart of stone.—Near by a stone, in a mass of rock that had fallen from some overhanging crag, we once came upon an adder as it lay in ribbon coil basking on the sunny ground. At our approach the reptile stirred, uncoiled itself, and hissing, gave signs of battle. Attacked, it retreated, and making for that grey stone wormed itself into a hole in its side. Its nest and home were there. And looking on that sheltered rock, the home and nest of the adder, it seemed to me a fitting emblem of that heart which the Bible describes as "a heart of stone."[d]

4—6. (4) **joined . . living**, *i.e.* who still lives on the earth. Dread of death as the ending of the earthly life is expressed even by O. T. saints.[a] **dog**, in O. T. a metaphor of the vilest persons.[b] **lion**, regarded as the noblest of the animals.[c] (5) **know . . die**, and while this may distress, it also gives opportunity for amendment, and impulse to goodness. **a reward**, of even living long in the memories of those who knew them. The dead are soon forgotten. (6) **perished**, ended and done. It was all earthly, and from earth they have passed. **under the sun**, Sol. confines his attention to the connections of the dead with *this* world, he tells nothing of their future state.[d]

The certainty of death (*v.* 5).—I. The awful declaration in the text. Consider death—1. In the pains it inflicts; 2. In the changes it produces; 3. In the dissolution that it effects. II. The evidences that we have of its truth. 1. The Bible declares that we shall die; 2. Experience teaches that we shall die; 3. Facts testify that we shall die; 4. The state of the world serves to convince us that we shall die. III. Draw some practical inferences from it. 1. Let us learn to transfer our hatred from the effect to the cause; 2. See the extreme folly of worldly anxiety and carking care; 3. Let us labour to prepare for death; 4. Let us make the best use of life we can—live to God, live to do good, that we may be enabled to say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."[e]

7, 8. (7) **go**, *etc.*,[a] in this passage Sol. renews the advice of ch. viii. 15. Cheerfully and contentedly accept your present lot.

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a "Hatred in Scrip. is not always to be understood rigorously. It frequently signifies no more than a lesser degree of love."—*Cruden.*

b "Men incline to say, 'If it must be a *short* life, then let it be a *merry* one.' So they say when no light of the life to come shines upon the life that now is."—*R. Tuck.* Ecc. viii. 11.

vv. 1, 2. *T. Pyle*, iii. 381; *Dr. W. Craig*, ii. 217.

v. 2. *G. Carleton*, 126; *eR. Fiddes*, i. 333; *B. Newton*, i. 281; *Dr. J. Foster*, iv. 203; *Dr. A. Rees*, iii. 295; *F. W. Fowle*, ii. 212.

v. 4. *T. Adams*, 478; *Dr. J. Jamieson*, ii. 65; *Dr. W. S. Done*, 52; *E. Cooper*, i. 63.

c G. Brooks.

d Dr. Guthrie.

a Is. xxxviii. 18, 19; Comp. Ps. vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 11, cxv. 17; Ecc. ix. 10.

b 1 Sa. xxiv. 14.

c Pr. xxx. 30.

"The meanest beggar alive has that comfort of this world, and does that service to it which the greatest prince, when he is dead, is utterly incapable of."—*Mat. Henry.*

d Job xiv. 10—14.

v. 5. *Bp. Hopkins*, iv. 531; *J. Piggot*, 373; *J. Pierce*, 118; *Dr. S. Ellesmere*, ii. 301; *J. W. Warter*, i. 243.

vv. 5, 6. *J. Culthrop*, i. 275; *Sir H. W. Moncrieff*, 170.

e Beta in 100 Sks.

a Wordsworth

and get as much good as you can out of it. wine, used as a symbol and producer of joy.[b] accepteth thy works, therefore it is of the utmost importauce that you live, while you live, wisely and well. (8) always white, the kind of garments suitable to joyousness and festivity. no ointment, in time of distress or grief the anointing of the body was neglected.

Customs of modern Arabs.—The customs of the Arabs in almost every detail have remained unchanged. Thus in dress, nomadic habits, goods, the anointing with oil, they retain the habits and formalities of the distant past, and the present is but the exact picture of those periods which are historically recorded in the Old Testament. "Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment."[c]

9, 10. (9) thy wife, thy one wife.[a] A possible commendation of the advantages of monogamy over polygamy. for that, *etc.*, reverting to his idea that the *enjoyment* of life is all that is now possible to man. (10) with thy might,[b] *i.e.* earnestly: put all your heart into it. no work, *comp.* Jno. ix. 4. device, or plan. Comp. the Christian view of the grave, now that "life and immortality have been brought to light."

Work while it is called day (*v.* 10).—I. The work for the hand to do. 1. To get good; 2. To do good. II. How it should be done. With the might. III. Why? 1. A great work to be done; 2. Little time to do it in; 3. No opportunities after death.[d]

Christian workers of the past.—Adam Clarke.—Dr. Adam Clarke said that "the old proverb about having too many irons in the fire is an abominable lie. Have all in it—shovel, tongs, and poker!" It is not so much the multiplicity of employments as the want of system in them that distracts and injures both the work and the workman.—*Wesley.*—Wesley said, "I am always in haste, but never in a hurry: leisure and I have long taken leave of each other." He travelled about 5,000 miles in a year; preached about three times a day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning, and his published works amounted to about 200 volumes.—*Asbury and Coke.*—Asbury travelled 6,000 miles a year, and preached incessantly. Coke crossed the Atlantic eighteen times, preached, wrote, travelled, established missions, begged from door to door for them, and laboured in all respects as if, like the Apostles, he would "turn the world upside down." At near seventy years of age he started to Christianise India! —*Luther.*—It is said that Luther preached almost daily; he lectured constantly as a professor; he was burdened with the care of all the churches; his correspondence, even as now extant, fills many volumes; he was perpetually harassed with controversies, and was one of the most voluminous writers of his day. —*Calvin.*—The same, and even more, may be said of Calvin. While in Strasburg he preached or lectured every day. In Geneva he was pastor, professor, and almost magistrate. He lectured every other day: on alternate weeks he preached daily; he was overwhelmed with letters from all parts of Europe, and was the author of works numerous and bulky, that any man of our day would think more than enough to occupy his whole undivided time. And all this, too, in the midst of perpetual infirmity of the flesh.—*Baxter.*—Baxter was also a tireless worker. Besides his regular and frequent occasions of preaching and

thinks that Sol. here adopts the language of the worldly libertine. "If this is thy estimate of human destiny, and if thou wilt confine thy view to the perishable things of this life, then take up with the language of those who say, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'"

b Ge. xxvii. **25**; Ps. civ. 15.

c Sir S. Baker.

a The constant fellowship of one kindred spirit is an important element in the enjoyment of the earthly life.

b Wordsworth, following *Hengstenberg* and *Ewald*, gives a singular turn to this passage. "Let might be right with thee. Care nothing for God or man, but use thy strength according to thy will." He regards the counsel as addressed to worldly politicians."

c "Harvest days are busy days. And we must make hay while the sun shines." —*Mat. Henry.*

"The soul's play-day is Satan's work-day: the idler the man the busier the tempter."—*South.*

v. 10. *W. Bridge*, v. 133; *R. Baxter*, vii. 487; *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 92; *Dr. J. Barrow*, iii. 141; *Abp. Tillotson*, xi. 59; *Dr. J. Duchal*, iii. 203; *Dr. Guyse*, 182; *Dr. T. Franklin*, ii. 159; *J. Balguy*, ii. 172; *E. Butcher*,

21; *H. Marriott*, ii. 169.

d W. W. Whythe.

e Bib. Treasury.

speaking at religious meetings, he spent two days of the week in catechising the people from house to house, spending an hour with each family. He was likewise forced by the necessity of his people to practise physic, and as he never took a penny from any one he was crowded with patients. In the midst of all this he was an author of most sweet and precious power, and wrote works that will never die—more in number than most of us can find time to read. Such have been some of God's good workmen of the past—"workmen that need not to be ashamed."[e]

11, 12. (11) **race**, *etc.*,[a] Sol. is still looking gloomily at life. Now he suggests that there is no certain advantage to the diligent and the earnest. Even when working "with our might" we must cherish the feeling that the results of our work we must leave in God's hands. **chance**, *i.e.* what seems to be chance, but really is Divine providence. "Apt seasons and fit conjunctures (seem to) have the greatest sway in the turns and disposals of men's fortunes."[b] (12) **snared**, *etc.*, strikingly indicating man's helpless condition in the presence of Divine destiny.

Death inevitable and often sudden (*v.* 12).—I. The time of every man's death is uncertain to him. II. Death often approaches men in a secret, unsuspected manner. III. When the snares of death fall on the sons of men there is no way of escape. IV. Death is often sudden. 1. Without previous warning; 2. No time for preparation; 3. Little reliance to be placed on death-bed repentance. V. The snares of death fall on some in an evil time. 1. To such as are immersed in the snares of the world; 2. To those who are engaged in the pleasures of the world; 3. To all who are unprepared.[c]

One thing to all.—"If one thing happens to all in the journey of life, what advantage have the good? Much every way, and specifically thus:—The hardness which disciples experience in following the Lord is righteousness rubbing on the remaining lusts, and so wasting their deformities away; whereas the hardness of a transgressor's way is the carnal mind, in its impotent enmity, dashing itself against the bosses of the Almighty buckler. The one is a strainer, made strait to purge the impurities away, through which the purified emerges into peace; the other is the vengeance which belongeth unto God, beginning even here to repay."[d]

13—15. (13) **this wisdom**, or this illustration of wisdom. Wisdom of this kind. (14) **little city**, *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. xx. 16—22. This account is a parable rather than an historical incident.[a] **bulwarks**, military works, mounds, etc., such as besiegers raise. (15) **he delivered**, *etc.*, so it seems that wisdom can, in part, avail against evil destiny. **remembered**, or *had remembered*; had taken any notice of him, or his wisdom.

The saviour of the city (*v.* 14).—I. I shall make some observations on this ideal poor wise man. 1. Although he had known he had been unhonoured, it was still his duty to save the city: 2. The same wisdom which enabled him to save a city would enable him to bear ingratitude; 3. No doubt this neglect was the best thing for the poor wise man—very often the load of honour turns men's brains. Am I addressing any poor wise man who has saved a city? Do I address any poor man who thinks he

a "Human actions are regarded as in this world dependent entirely on Div. fate, and their success, therefore, is too often in no comparison with the real ability and strength of the actor."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Sterne.

v. 11. *Dr. T. Manton*, 247; *Abp. Tillotson*, iii. 26; *Dr. S. Clarke*, vi. 295; *L. Sterne*, ii. 5.

v. 12. *B. Beddome*, 6.

c Dr. Lathrop.

"Not because I raise myself above something, but because I raise myself to something, do I approve myself."—*Jacobi.*

d Dr. Arnott.

a "The Chaldee Targum explains this passage as an allegory: 'The city is the human body, the great king is an evil desire, the poor man a good disposition.' But this is wholly unnecessary."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 13—15. *W. Jones*, i. 209. *vv.* 14, 15. *R. Erskine*, v. 321.

could save a city as well as anybody, if he were in his proper place? II. I shall adduce a case in point,—the great example of the unappreciated poor wise man—Jesus of Nazareth. 1. Like the poor man in the text, He was a public benefactor; 2. He was wise; 3. The one barrier to His popularity was His poverty: 4. His poverty was no barrier to usefulness—nay, it contributed to His usefulness.[b]—*The city saved.*—Historical: Cities saved by single persons: Athens, Themistocles; Syracuse, Archimedes; Samaria and Dothan, Elisha; Jerusalem, Isaiah. Prob. no particular person or event ref. to. Text a fable or parable, meant to show that men must not expect to be rewarded by men even if they do good. Consider—I. *The poor wise man of the fable, and what he teaches.* 1. One should try to do good though sure of no reward. If men praise the good done, well; if not, never mind. We should do God's will, and wait for His "Well done." Dr. Franklin read Cotton Mather's *Essays to do Good*, when young, and resolved that "doing good" should be his chief aim. 2. The man was *wise*, and therefore could endure ingratitude. He did what was right for the sake of the right, and not of the reward. Wisdom chooses the right time and way of doing good. Praise often spoils people, as dainties do those who have been used to homely fare. 3. Such men get their wisdom from God. He mercifully gives wisdom sometimes to counterbalance poverty. Wisdom is true wealth. Knowledge is power. II. *The poor wise man of history, and what He teaches.* Not Themistocles, or Elisha, but Jesus. 1. He was poor. Had no need to be. Not poor because He could not help it. Became poor for the good of others. He could better mix with the poor. His influence not that of wealth and station. Common people heard Him gladly. He understood all about the poor, spoke in a familiar way about familiar things. 2. He was wise. Did what He saw needed to be done, at the right time, in the right way. Did not benefit some at the expense of others. Mourned over the city, but not its ingratitude to Him. 3. He saved a city: town of Mansoul. Yours, mine. Saved it by dying Himself. Ill. siege of Calais. Hostages. The queen said, "Save them for my sake." Learn:—(1) He is remembered by many—angels, saints in glory, good men on earth, sinners when they repent. 2. He is forgotten by the wicked, who are benefited by the blessings He gives; even such will think of Him on their death-bed. In heaven or in hell, He will be remembered by the saved and the lost for ever.

Men who saved cities.—It is not unlikely that in these words Solomon referred to some real historical fact, for such a fact is recorded in more than one instance. Archimedes, by his extraordinary wisdom, saved the city of Syracuse, when besieged by the Romans. He did this, not by fighting, nor by teaching others to fight; he acted not as a soldier, but as a philosopher—constructing machines and burning lenses, which destroyed the Roman ships as they approached the walls of the city. It is true the city was taken, yet not by the Roman forces, but by the treachery of one who betrayed it. Nor was Archimedes either rewarded or even spared on account of his skill, but was cruelly murdered while in the act of working out a new problem for the further safety of the city. There is also a story of Anaximenes, who met Alexander when he was marching to destroy Lampsacus. Alexander, suspecting that Anaximenes was coming to intercede

vv. 14–17. *J. H. Smith*, i. 157.

b Stems and Twigs.

"I would advise all in general, that they would take into serious consideration the true and genuine ends of knowledge; that they seek it not either for pleasure, or contention, or contempt of others, or for profit, or fame, or for honour and promotion, or such-like adulterate or inferior ends; but for merit and emolument of life, that they may regulate and perfect the same in charity."—*Bacon.*

"Knowledge is corrupted four manner of ways. First, by the contempt of it, in ignorance. Secondly, by the luxuriousness and wantonness of it, in curiosity. Thirdly, by the defect and uncertainty of it, in opinion. Fourthly, by contradiction and opposition unto it, in error."—*Reynolds.*

"When we rise in knowledge, as the prospect widens, the objects of our regard become more obscure; and the unlettered peasant, whose views are only directed to the narrow sphere around him, beholds nature with a finer relish, and tastes her blessings with a keener appetite, than the philosopher whose mind attempts to grasp

a universal system."—*Goldsmith.*

"Knowledge is that information which the mind receives either by its own experience or by the testimony of others. The beneficial use of knowledge is wisdom. That portion of knowledge, the truth of which can be demonstrated, is science."—*Maunder.*

for the safety of the city, immediately resolved to frustrate his purpose by taking an oath that he would not grant him anything that he should ask. Then said Anaximenes, "I request that you will destroy this city." Alexander was thus outwitted, but he respected his oath, and the city was spared. Thus it was the wisdom of one man which, by suddenly taking advantage of Alexander's oath, saved a noble city from destruction. In like manner, when Alexander was marching against Jerusalem, he was met by Jaddua, the high-priest, whose wise policy subdued the vengeful determination of Alexander, won his favour, and caused the city to be saved from destruction. Solomon could not, of course, have one of these instances in view, because he lived long before they occurred; but he might have others in view equally true. His design was to show that in this life virtue and wisdom may perform the most important services, and yet often be unrewarded; and hence the certainty of a future life, when God will render to every man according to his deeds.[c]

c *Dr. W. Cooke.*

16—18. (16) **wisdom**, or mental energy, and skill. **strength**, or mere material, brute force. **despised**, and this Sol. puts among the strange things that perplex him in the affairs of this world.[a] (17) **in quiet**, *i.e.* when they are calmly listened to; as in the case given the words of the poor wise man were. **cry**, loudest noise of command by king or general. (18) **one . . good**, the sinner here is "one of those coarse miscreants or fools, who can command physical strength, but are destitute of wisdom."[b]

a "Wisdom, however splendid, if in lowly state, is so obscured by the cloud of poverty that in a brief time it has all eyes averted, and utterly fails from the memory."—*Cartwright.*

b *O. Zöckler.*

Individual influence (*v.* 18).—I. How a sinner destroys good. 1. By not doing good; 2. By an evil example; 3. By a bad example. II. How much good he destroys. 1. A good disposition; 2. A good conscience; 3. Good sense; 4. Good learning; 5. A good estate; 6. His own soul; 7. The souls of others.[c]

"One sinner, who makes it his business to debauch others, may defeat and frustrate the intentions of a great many good laws and a great deal of good preaching, and draw many into his pernicious ways; one sinner may be the ruin of a town, as one Achan troubled the whole camp of Israel."—*Mat. Henry.*

c *W. W. Whythe.*

"*Wet the ropes.*"—The property of cords contracting their length by moisture became generally known, it is said, on the raising of the Egyptian obelisk in the square facing St. Peter's, at Rome, by order of Pope Sixtus V. The great work was undertaken in the year 1586, and the day for raising the obelisk was marked with great solemnity. High mass was celebrated at St. Peter's, and the architect and workmen received the benediction of the Pope. The blast of a trumpet was the given signal, when engines were set in motion by an incredible number of horses; but not until after fifty-two unsuccessful attempts had been made was the huge block lifted from the earth. As the ropes which held it had somewhat stretched, the base of the obelisk could not reach the summit of the pedestal, when a man in the crowd cried out, "Wet the ropes!" This advice was followed, and the column, as of itself, gradually rose to the required height, and was placed upright on the pedestal prepared for it.[d]

d *Bib. Treasury.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1. "This ch. consists entirely of rhythmical sentences, giving advice, more or less, as to conduct."[a] **dead flies**, Heb. *flies of death.* Flies are killed by dropping into the scent, and there

a "The thought wh. underlies the whole ch. is the advantage of that

they pollute it.[b] **ointment**, the word intimates valuable and delicate perfume. **apothecary**, perfumer. Dealer in spices. **little folly**, insignificant as a fly. The higher a man's character is the more does folly, or sin, spoil it.[c] "Those who make a great profession of religion have need to walk very circumspectly."

A little evil spoils much good (*v.* 1).—I. We will take two or three illustrations of the passage before us. It is true, as a general principle and rule, that a little evil will counterbalance much good. History shows this. One sin ruined the world. The distinguishing sins and follies of individual nations and men: Benvenuto Cellini—passion; Bacon—avarice. II. Account for what we have thus illustrated. 1. The presence of folly in the midst of wisdom and honour—traceable to a sinful nature, to onesidedness of culture, to overlooking of little things, to malice of the enemy, to worldly opposition; 2. The power of a little folly in marring reputation for wisdom. Because there is so much folly in the world. Men are apt to point at the folly of others. Men form their judgment of others by little things.

"*A single worm killed that tree.*"—During the summer of 1853 (writes a gentleman) I was an invalid, and was induced, on the recommendation of my physician, to go to the Hydropathic Establishment at Sudbrook Park, near Richmond, in Surrey. During my sojourn there, I was one day walking through the romantic grounds and park with some friends and the proprietor, Dr. Ellis, when the doctor drew our attention to a large sycamore tree, decayed to the core. "That fine tree," said he, "was killed by a single worm." In answer to our inquiries, we found that about two years previously the tree was as healthy as any in the park, when a wood-worm, about three inches long, was observed to be forcing its way under the bark of the trunk. It caught the eye of a naturalist who was staying at the establishment, and he remarked, "Let that worm alone, doctor, and it will kill the tree." This seemed very improbable, but it was agreed that the black-headed worm should not be disturbed. After a time it was found that the worm had tunnelled its way a considerable distance under the bark. The next summer the leaves of the tree dropped off very early, and in the succeeding year it was a dead, rotten thing, and the hole made by the worm might be seen in the very heart of the once noble trunk. "Ah," said one who was present, "let us learn a lesson from that dead tree. How many, who once promised fair for usefulness in the world and the church, have been ruined by a single sin!"

2—4. (2) **right hand**, or, in the right place. "The right hand is more expert than the left."[a] **at his left**, not having right self-control, he goes about things as awkwardly as a left-handed man.[b] (3) **walketh . . way**, comes out into public view and relations. In all his intercourse. **saith . . fool**, exposing his folly in his speech and acts.[c] (4) **against thee**, in anger. **leave . . place**, in thine anger against him. **yielding**, the spirit of patience often wins the victory, calming down anger.

Living to work.—We live no more than we work, and we work no more than we labour. As idleness is the burial of ourselves, so unlaboriousness (if I may so speak) is the burial of our works. Without diligence they not only flag, but die upon our hands. There are some whose very business is idleness, and there are

wisdom wh. includes piety and patience, as practical guidance through all the perplexities of life."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The swarms of flies in the E. very soon corrupt and destroy any moist unguent or mixture wh. is not carefully covered fr. them, and pollute a dish of food in a few minutes."—*Tristram.*

"The verbs are *sing.*, the noun *plur.*, implying that *each* of the flies causes the stinking savour."—*Fausset.*

c Ecc. vii. 1.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Duchal*, iii. 57.

A white garment appears worse with slight soiling than do coloured garments much soiled; so a little fault in a good man attracts more attention than great offences in bad men.—Ecc. x. 1.

a "The wise man goes about his business with dexterity, turns his hand readily to it, and goes through it with despatch."—*Mat. Henry.*

b "A wise man's sense is in its place ready to help and protect him; but a fool's is missing when it is wanted, and so is useless."—*Rosenmüller.*

many who are idle in their business. "Not slothful in business." To be slow in business is ill, but to be slothful is far worse. An industrious man is often wearied with working, but he is never weary of his work. To be weary when we know not why, foreshows diseases of the body. I am sure it is an argument of a diseased soul. The heart of the sluggard is like the field of the sluggard, overgrown with weeds.

5—7. (5) as, or, by reason of. Evil is occasioned by this error on the part of the ruler. (6) folly . . dignity, through the favouritism of the ruler, wh. blinds him to the unfitness of the persons he raises to high places.[a] rich, here in wisdom rather than in wealth. The noble and distinguished. (7) upon horses, so put out of their proper place by the caprice of the king.[b]

Servants on horses (*v.* 7).—I. This phenomenon may be observed in national life: kings devoid of morality or dignity; princes besotted and bloodthirsty; statesmen vain and mercenary; generals craven and indolent. II. This phenomenon may be observed in ecclesiastical life: Bonner, Wolsey, Laud,—preferred to such as Ridley, Latimer, and Taylor. III. This phenomenon may be observed in social life: the Countess of Huntingdon; the actress Siddons. 1. The position of the believer must be like his Lord's; 2. The position of the believer tends to fit him for being with his Lord.[c]

8—10. (8) diggeth, *etc.*, refer. to the ruler who thus sets up unworthy persons: the evil is sure to come back on himself.[a] shall fall, not absolutely *shall*, but *it is very likely that he will*. breaketh, *etc.*, the hedge is rather the wall of stones and plaster usually built round a vineyard: in the crevices serpents are wont to nestle.[b] (9) hurt, is in danger of being hurt by their falling on him. endangered, or cut himself. (10) whet,[c] or sharpen.

Penalty (*v.* 8).—I. The hedge,—God's laws: they are designed for the protection of His possessions, and for the security of His loyal subjects. II. The breaker,—Adam; every man. All have sinned. They are wilful, having been warned. III. The serpent,—penalty: suffering here, and hereafter. IV. The repairer. This is the Lord Jesus. He repairs the broken law, and offers an antidote to the bitten, and deliverance from future harm. We have broken the hedge, the serpent has bitten Him.[d]

The workman and his tools.—See ver. 9, "cleaveth wood." Sketch a scene in a wood: woodman felling trees; hard, knotty wood; tools soon blunted; woodman has to "put to more strength;" previous fatigue disqualifies him for this; he sharpens his tools, and then works on, etc.; wisdom, *i.e.* his sense of what is fit, directs him. If he were guided by common sense, his work and fatigue would be less, and earnings greater. Consider—I. *The work we have to do.* Trees to fell. Ignorance, bad habits, social drawbacks, natural disqualifications to overcome. These are trees of hard wood. II. *The tools we have to use.* We have axes to use: mind, memory, resolution, heart, conscience. These we have about us. There are others also, as books, schools, etc. III. *How to use them.* Three ways:—1. When the axe gets blunt, whet it. Exercise thought, memory, feeling, etc.; study books, obey teachers, etc. 2. Otherwise put

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c "He is arrogant as well as ignorant; he despises the wise, and thinks them fools; and is not conscious that he is a fool, but thinks himself wise."—*Wordsworth.*

a One of the most frequent weaknesses of kings is the injudicious selection of high officials.

b Pr. xxx. 21, 22.

c Stems and Twigs.

He who does not know his own faults has learned nothing; he who has learned that he knows nothing is already very wise.

a Esth. vii. 10; Ps. vii. 15; Pr. xxvi. 27. Comp. 1 Ki. xiv. 10—14, xvi. 26.

b Isa. xxxiv. 15; Am. v. 19.

"The breaking of this hedge appears clearly as an action by which one seeks to injure his neighbour."—*O. Zöckler.*

"If princes become tyrants, or subjects become rebels, all histories will tell both what is likely to be their fate, and that it is at their utmost peril, and it were better for both to be content within their own bounds."—*Mat. Henry.*

c A.-S. *hwettan*, Ger. *wetzen*: to rub for the purpose of sharpening.

d Stems and Twigs.

on more strength. If we have not wherewith to whet the iron, we must be more diligent with such means as we have. 3. The best way. Whet the iron, and put on strength as well. To do this, seek wisdom profitable to direct: God gives it; we all need it; all may have it. Hint:—(1) Seek wisdom; (2) Use wisdom.[e]

e Hive.

11—13. (11) **without enchantment**, *i.e.* if he be not charmed into quietness. "As one may escape the serpent by charms, so one may escape the sting of a calumniator by discretion."[a] **babbler**, *lit.* "Master of the tongue."[b] (12) **gracious**, full of kindliness and grace: doing good to those who hear him. **swallow up**, *etc.*, bring him to ruin.[c] (13) **beginning**, *etc.*, his foolish talk tends to become worse than foolish.

Serpent-charming.—Of the incantation of serpents there can be no doubt. It is mentioned in Scripture, and very many have been the instances witnessed of the power possessed by the snake-charmers over these subtle and venomous creatures. It was in India, where serpents and charmers abound, that a little boy of three years of age once wandered unobserved into a room where a large tub of water was kept, for the purpose of sailing some little boats. His mother coming to seek him, and finding the door ajar, looked in before she entered, when, to her horror, she observed that while her child was quietly amusing himself on one side of the tub, a large cobra was coiled round at the other, which, with head raised and hood extended, quietly watched the movements of the child. One step, and the little one, unthinking of evil, would have received the poisonous wound, from which there could have been no recovery. It was but the work of an instant for the mother to catch up her little son, place him in safety in the next room, and give the alarm. But the serpent had quickly made its escape into the garden, the way by which it had entered, and could not be found. A serpent-charmer was called, who, seating himself near a hole in the ground into which it was supposed the animal might have retreated, commenced playing a wild strain on a flute-like instrument, while all eyes were fixed upon the entrance to the hole. In about ten minutes the serpent's head appeared, then its body, and finally it sat before the charmer, its head raised, and turning it from side to side, as if listening intently to the music. After a short time the man was able to handle the serpent with impunity, and at last he coolly twisted it round his neck, and walked off.[d]

a Fausset.

b "One of ready tongue, not making timely use of his gift; a hero with his tongue, but without energy and promptness in action."—*O. Zöckler.*

"Instances are not wanting where the serpents have been deaf to the voice and music of the charmers, and fastened upon them; when death has taken place in a few minutes."—*Gadsby.*

c Pr. x. 32, xii. 13; Matt. xii. 36.

"Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented by fresh acquisitions, to future ages."—*Macaulay.*

d Bib. Treasury.

14, 15. (14) **full of words**, or plans; declarations of what he *will do*.[a] He talks very freely about things of which he can know nothing. (15) **wearies**, &c. he does not conduct his business with wisdom and skill. Intelligence lightens labour. **know . . city**, *i.e.* they have not the capacity to apprehend the plainest thing, such as the entrance into a great city.

High-falutin talk.—Dr. Oliver Wendall Holmes, in the course of an interesting article on the photographic art, delivers himself of the following astounding paragraph: "Then we replace the slide in the shield, draw this out of the camera, and carry it back into the shadowy realm where Cocytus flows in black nitrate of silver, and Acheron stagnates in the pool of hyposulphite, and invisible ghosts, trooping down from the world of day, cross a Styx of dissolved sulphate of iron, and appear before the Rhada-

a Jas. iv. 13.

vv. 15—17. *J. Dieteric, Ant.* 634.

"There is nothing that makes a man suspect much, more than to know little; and therefore men should remedy suspicion by procuring to know more, and not to keep their suspicions in smother."—*Lord Bacon.*

"What cracker is this same, that deafs our ears with this abundance of superfluous breath?"—*Shakespeare.*
"There are two distinct sorts of what we call bashfulness: this, the awkwardness of a booby, which a few steps into the world will convert into the pertness of a coxcomb; that, a consciousness, which the most delicate feelings produce, and the most extensive knowledge cannot always remove."—*Mackenzie.*
b Jeffers.

manthus of that lurid Hades!"—Some years ago, a physician, while in his patient's room, thus addressed a surgeon: "You must not fail to phlebotomise the old gentleman to-morrow!" "I will never suffer it." cried the sick man, in a fright. "Sir, don't be alarmed," replied the surgeon; "the doctor only orders you to be bled." "O, as for the bleeding," replied the venerable patient, "it matters little; but as for the other, I would sooner die than endure it." Who will dare blame our aged friend for such a determination? What sane man would submit to the barbarous and excruciating operation of being phlebotomised?—Andrew Jackson was once making a stump speech in a country village out West. Just as he was concluding, Amos Kendall, who sat behind him, whispered, "Tip 'em a little Latin, General; they won't be satisfied without it." The "Hero of New Orleans" instantly thought of a few phrases he knew, and in a voice of thunder, wound up his speech by exclaiming, "*E pluribus unum—sine quâ non;—ne plus ultra!—multum in parvo!*" The effect was tremendous, and the shouts could be heard for miles.[b]

16, 17. (16) **a child,** young in years: but especially young in intelligence. **princes . . morning,** regarded as a sign of intemperance. (17) **son of nobles,** Heb. fig. for "one of noble disposition." **in due season,** after duty is properly performed. In E. much public duty is done in the early morning.[a]

Eating in the morning.—It is considered unmanly in Samoa to eat early in the morning. It is even the language of abuse to hint that a person does so. It is like comparing him to a pig, which is fed the first thing in the morning.[b]

a Pr. xxxi. 4.
b Dr. Turner.

18—20. (18) **building decayeth,** all buildings requiring constant attention and repair. **droppeth through,** the rain coming through, and breaking down, the flat roof.[a] (19) **money . . things,** other things have their special ends. Money is necessary for all things. (20) **thy thought,** bec. there is danger of even seditious thought gaining some expression, in look or attitude if not in word. **bird,** *etc.*, the swift flight of birds, and their possible observation, though so high up, are intimated.

The idle man.—The idle man is the devil's cushion, on which he taketh his free ease; who, as he is incapable of any good, so is he fitly disposed for all evil motions. The standing water soon stinketh; whereas the current ever keeps clear and cleanly, conveying down all noisome matter that might infect it by the force of its stream. If I do but little good to others by my endeavours; yet this is great good to me, that by my labour I keep myself from hurt.[b]

a "The peasants build very ephemeral habitations with small stones and mud, which, if deserted, soon fall and melt away like summer snow on the mountains. The roof of any of these huts, forsaken or neglected through idleness, will 'drop through' in a single winter, and then the unprotected walls wash down by the rain, and speedily become mere shapeless heaps."—*Thomson.*
b Bp. Hall.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1. **bread,** or bread-corn. **waters,** allusion to custom of sowing the Nile lands while the waters were lying over them.[a] Sol. intends to inculcate here the duty of charity. The word "waters" is sometimes used in Scrip. for "multitudes," *e.g.* Rev. xvi. 5.

Certainties and uncertainties (*v.* 1).—I. There are certainties and uncertainties in reference to God. 1. He is the supreme and original Worker. II. There are certainties and uncertainties in reference to Providence. 1. Man's agency is subordinate; 2.

a "The Eg. husbandman sows his seed, according to its nature, at various stages of the inundation. Rice, for instance, is thrown upon the water when it

Man must work according to certain laws. III. There are certainties in reference to society. 1. That men have certain moral and spiritual duties to perform; 2. That the latent evil of the human heart is liable to explosion; cultivate, as much as possible, your thinking powers; let not the uncertainties connected with Providence tempt you either to indolence or despondency; work in faith through the power of God.[b]

Whitefield and the lantern-boy.—Whitefield often stood on the outside of the Court-house in Philadelphia, and preached to the thousands who crowded the streets below. On one of these occasions a youth pressed as near to his favourite preacher as possible, and, to testify his respect, held a lantern for his accommodation. Soon after the sermon began he became so absorbed in the subject, that the lantern fell from his hand and was dashed to pieces, and that part of the audience in the immediate vicinity of the speaker's stand was not a little discomposed by the occurrence. Some years after, Mr. Whitefield, in the course of his fifth visit to America, about the year 1754, on a journey from the southward, called at St. George's, *viâ* Delaware, where Mr. Rodgers was then settled in the ministry, and spent some time with him. In the course of the visit, Mr. Rodgers, riding one day with his visitor in a close carriage, asked him whether he recollected the occurrence of the little boy who was so much affected with his preaching as to let the lantern fall? Whitefield answered, "Oh! yes, I remember it well, and have often thought I would give anything in my power to know who that little boy was, and what had become of him." Mr. Rodgers replied with a smile, "I am that little boy." Mr. Whitefield, with tears of joy, started from his seat, clasped him in his arms, and with strong emotion remarked that he was the fourteenth person then in the ministry whom he had discovered in the course of that visit to America, of whose conversion he had been the instrument.

2, 3. (2) give, *etc.*, i.e. do not stint your generosities, for at best you can do but little toward relieving human sorrows.[a] (3) empty, *etc.*, i.e. they do not hoard, they give away. Or perhaps, with allusion to coming misfortunes: when the clouds of calamity are full, they are sure to empty their contents on thee. tree fall,[b] *etc.*, wherever the misfortune comes, if you are in the way, you will have to bear it.

Law and life (*v.* 3).—I. The key to the passage, the broad idea which underlies the whole, is in the first verse. The main point here then is, that in all husbandry there are two elements—the intelligence and energy of the man, and the co-operation of a secret force, the springs of which and the methods escape him, but on which absolutely depend all his fruits. II. The writer of this book asks us to consider how much that has the most important bearing on the results of our activity is hopelessly beyond the control of our hand. 1. The awful force and inevitable certainty of the processes of nature; 2. There is the absolutely certain sequence of physical causes and effects, or antecedents and consequents, which we call laws of nature, which vary not one hair's breadth from their ordained order in obedience to the mandates of our will, but which, by observing and mastering the principle of that order, we can use for the accomplishing of our ends; 3. The writer, while he sees this constant order, had a dark sad vision of the uncertainties which cross it. III. There

has become confined within the limits of the little square beds into which the soil is divided for the purpose. These beds are separated by narrow causeways, or paths of raised earth, upon wh. the labourer treads, dryshod, as he passes from bed to bed in the prosecution of his task."—*Van Lennep.*

"Do good, cast thy bread into the water; it shall one day be repaid thee."—*Arab. Proverb.*

"Wheat is never sown on wet lands; barley sometimes is."—*Gadsby.*

v. 1. *R. Duke*, 1; *J. Douglas*, 73; *H. A. Atkinson*, 267; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 509.

b Caleb Morris.

a "Or, you know not what reverses may befall either that person who by your liberality will be strengthened to meet them, or yourself, who may come to need grateful friends. Comp. Lu. xvi. 9."—*Spk. Com.*

b This image is not in any way connected with the state of departed souls.

vv. 1, 2. *F. Webb*, i. 103.

v. 2. *A. Munton*, 347.

"Our life is like that wax melting in the flame. Death puts his stamp on it, and then it cools, and

the impress never can be changed. Or like the burning metal, running forth from the cauldron into the mould. Death cools us in that mould, and we are cast into that shape throughout eternity."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

being this law of calamity at work, defying all calculation and all defence, what is the true policy of life? 1. Do not be afraid of giving with a bountiful hand, lest your charity should be wasted; 2. Do not be afraid of working, lest your toil should be fruitless; 3. Do not be afraid of loving, because every love is a sure germ of pain.[c]

"*The Dairyman's Daughter*" *in Turkey.*—"That well-known tract *The Dairyman's Daughter*, written in the Isle of Wight, by the Rev. Legh Richmond, found its way to Constantinople. There it was translated into the Armenian tongue by the Rev. Dr. Goodell, an American missionary to Turkey. A copy of this version was carried to Nicomedia (or Ismid), and fell into the hands of a Vartabed, or preaching priest of the Armenian Church. He, upon perusing it, was deeply affected by the picture it presented of simple and genuine Christianity, the result of faith in Jesus and the operation of the Holy Ghost, such as he supposed to have existed only amongst the primitive Christians. Comparing the spirit and principles of this sweet story with the condition of the corrupt and idolatrous Armenian Church, he was led to the study of the New Testament; and the result was his own conversion by the Divine grace. He then communicated the knowledge of this wondrous tract, and his own blessed experience, to another Vartabed, with the same results in his case also. These two converted priests, expelled from their own corrupt communion, were the chief beginnings of the evangelical church now existing in Nicomedia. That church has given origin to two others in the neighbourhood; and as the good influence extends itself widely in all directions, it is impossible to say how far throughout Turkey may yet be diffused the beneficial leaven of *The Dairyman's Daughter.*[d]

4—6. (4) observeth .. sow, such watching the clouds would be a sign of a timid hesitancy that would ensure failure.[a] (5) spirit, or wind, comp. Jno. iii. 8. bones, *etc.*, Job x. 8—12.[b] works of God, the issues of God's will: His ways in the future. (6) whether shall prosper, *i.e.* whether God will permit success to any or all. We should not only be diligent, but we should work at various things, in view of the uncertain success attending all human schemes.

The evening (*v.* 5).—I. Every day has its evening—1. With its quiet hour for meditation—as with Isaac; 2. With its vacant hour to be filled up with some work for Jesus. II. Every life also has its evening. 1. It is clouded or bright, for the most part, as the day has been; 2. Sometimes the evening is unlike the day,—a contrast to it. III. The evening does not always commence at the same hour—short and long days,—with some the sun goes down while it is yet noon. Learn:—In secular things men live for the evening of life: let it be so in things spiritual.

Dr. Beecher and his one hearer.—A story is told of Dr. Beecher, of Cincinnati, that is worth recording, as illustrating the truth that we can never tell what may result from an apparently insignificant action. The doctor once engaged to preach for a country minister, on exchange, and the Sabbath proved to be excessively stormy, cold, and uncomfortable. It was in midwinter, and the snow was piled in heaps all along the roads, so as to make the passage very difficult. Still the minister urged his

[c] *J. B. Brown, B.A.*

"We are all drawn and attracted by the desire of knowledge and science, to excel in which, we think, is honourable; while we deem it mean and base to be led astray, and to wander in ignorance and error."—*Cicero.*

[d] *Dr. Blackwood.*

[a] "The farmer would get on badly, who, instead of sowing and reaping, spent his time in watching the wind and clouds."—*Fausset.*

"If we stand thus, magnifying every little difficulty, and making the worst of it, starting objections and fancying hardship and danger where there is none, we shall never go on, much less go through with our work, nor make anything of it."—*Mat. Henry.*

"He whom the weather does not suit, and who is ever waiting for a more favourable season, misses finally the proper period for

horse through the drifts till he reached the church, put the animal into a shed, and went in. As yet there was no person in the house, and after looking about, the old gentleman, then young, took his seat in the pulpit. Soon the door opened, and a single individual walked up the aisle, looked about, and took a seat. The hour came for commencing service, but no more hearers. Whether to preach to such an audience or not, was now the question; and it was one that Lyman Beecher was not long in deciding. He felt that he had a duty to perform, and he had no right to refuse to do it because only one man could reap the benefit of it; and accordingly he went through all the services, praying, singing, preaching, and the benediction, with only one hearer. And when all was over, he hastened down from the desk to speak to his "congregation," but he had departed. A circumstance so rare was referred to occasionally, but twenty years afterwards it was brought to the doctor's mind quite strangely. Travelling somewhere in Ohio, the doctor alighted from the stage one day, in a pleasant village, when a gentleman stepped up and spoke to him, familiarly calling him by name. "I do not remember you," said the doctor. "I suppose not," said the stranger, "but we spent two hours together in a house alone once, in a storm." "I do not recall it, sir," added the old man: "pray, pray, when was it?" "Do you remember preaching twenty years ago, in such a place, to a single person?" "Yes, yes," said the doctor, grasping his hand, "I do, indeed; and if you are the man, I have been wishing to see you ever since." "I am the man, sir: and that sermon saved my soul, made a minister of me, and yonder is my church. The converts of that sermon, sir, are all over Ohio." [c]

7, 8. (7) the light,[a] of life; wh. the young are especially able to enjoy. behold the sun, Ps. lviii. 8; Jno. xi. 9. (8) days of darkness, the many times of trouble there are sure to be, and the long waiting months of old age, when the interest in life largely ceases. Some think that the reference is to the dark waiting time in Sheol.[b]

Remember.—I. In present prosperity remember the dark days to come (xi. 7, 8). Light, life, joy, prosperity, etc., are pleasant. We may "be glad in the gay sunshine." Right that we should be so. Right also that we should remember that, as night succeeds day, and winter follows summer, so too the trouble man is born to (Job v. 7) will presently overtake us. Men labour in the day that they may have a home to return to at night; they toil in summer that they may not starve in winter; and in prosperity they should "lay by in store" for rainy days. Especially in regard to the higher life, now is our spring and summer. Let us store up our Sabbath lessons against days of toil, trouble, sickness, etc. II. In youthful joyousness remember the judgment (xi. 9, 10). No harm in innocent mirth. But it is good to be "merry and wise" together, and not to be merry alone. For then we shall be careful in choice of sports and companions. The command, "Rejoice," etc., not ironical, as some think (see Patrick, etc.), but serious. The gist of it is, Let youthful joyousness be tempered and purified by right thought and principle. "Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less," but pure and holy. III. In bodily health remember the common lot (xii. 1—7). "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Our

action."—*O. Zöckler.*

b Also Job xxxi. 15; Ps. cxxxix. 13—16; Jer. i. 5.

v. 6. *T. St. John*, ii. 152; *Abp. Sumner*, 318.

"Knowledge is never of very serious use to man until it has become part of his customary course of thinking. The knowledge which barely passes through the mind resembles that which is gained of a country by a traveller who is whirled through it in a stage; or by a bird flitting over it in his passage to another."—*Dwight.*

c *Hogg's Instructor.*

a The "light" here stands for "life," of which it is the symbol. Comp. Job iii. 20; Ps. xxxvi. 9, xlix. 19, lvi. 13.

b Regarded as the dark prison beneath the earth.

"While the sun of earthly prospects shines, we are apt to feel the day of evil at a distance from our minds; we are reluctant to admit the possibility of a change of scene; we shut out the thought of calamity and distress as an unwelcome intruder. Experience, in most cases, soon alters the sentiments, and events arise which impress an indelible conviction of the short duration of

earthly good."—*Robert Hall.*

v. 7. *S. Smith*, i. 123; *A. Munton*, 145; *H. Turner*, 323.

v. 8. *Dr. J. Scott*, iii. 295; *J. Norris*, iv. 353; *R. Hall*, v. 295.

"All men that have rambled after happiness have failed; neither learning, nor fame, nor wealth, nor pleasure, taken separately or jointly, could ever give it, without acting up to the height and dignity of human nature, and getting a right set of principles for thought and practice; amongst which may be reckoned the love of justice, temperance, fortitude, and benevolence."—*Antoninus.*

"It is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."—*Lord Bacon.*

earthly house is called a tabernacle. A tabernacle, or tent, is at best a frail thing, adapted only for pilgrims, travellers. Only in the future shall we have a "building of God," etc.—a body that sickness and death cannot touch. (See Matthew Henry's beautiful comment on this passage—also Robert Southey's poem, "Father William.") The best provision for sickness and death,—religion. This to be best studied and obtained during health. IV. In every circumstance remember the law of God (xii. 13, 14). This known and obeyed will help us to possess prosperity without pride, to enjoy youth without sin, and in health to prepare for the end. The commandment is exceeding broad. It includes thought, desire, motive, as well as word and deed. If the fear of God be lodged in the heart, it will outwork itself in obedience to the Divine will. Learn—1. Gratitude for prosperity; 2. Wisdom in recreation; 3. Forethought in health; 4. Obedience to God at all times.

A cloudless sky.—When in Madeira, I rose early one morning, hoping to reach the summit of a certain mountain, to gaze upon a magnificent scene, and enjoy the balmy air. I had a servant with me, and we had got up some two thousand feet, when a thick mist was seen descending upon us, quite obscuring the whole face of the heavens, and I thought we had no chance left but at once to retrace our steps. But as the cloud came nearer, my guide ran on, penetrating the mist, and calling to me ever and anon, and saying, "Press on, master, press on! There is light beyond." I did press on; in a few minutes the mist was passed, and I gazed upon a scene of transcendent beauty. All was bright and cloudless above; and below was the almost level mist, concealing the world below, and glistening in the rays of the sun like a field of untrodden snow:—there was nothing between us and heaven. I have often thought since there was nothing like "pressing on" in every trial of life, assured that, although the mists of earth may hang around us at certain stages of our journey, there is light beyond. You, the friends of Sunday schools, have present difficulties, but I would ask you to listen to the voice which on that occasion came from the untutored Madeiranese—"Press on! there is light beyond"—in this world; and, by-and-by, there shall be the light, all unclouded, of heaven; and, rejoicing in that light, we shall be constrained to exclaim, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth: the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."[c]

c *Mr. Corderoy.*

9, 10. (9) rejoice, perhaps spoken with a tinge of irony. The advice, however, is in accordance with Sol.'s counsel throughout this book, to make the best of time present. The limit to free enjoyment should be the remembrance of coming judgment.[a] God . . judgment, not exclusively in the next life; even *here* men come into God's judgment, and suffer the necessary bitter consequences of self-indulgence. (10) sorrow, or that wh. will surely work out at last into sorrow. thy flesh, the body being the organ of sensual and sinful indulgences; 2 Ti. ii. 22.

a "These sentences mark the gradual progress in self-indulgence, to which the young especially are prone; they see the roses, but do not discover the thorns, until pierced by them."—*Fausset.*

"Thoughtless and sensual young man, ... gratify thy appe-

An antidote to dissipation (*v.* 10).—Our text teaches us—I. That there will be a future judgment. 1. The time of it is appointed: 2. The precursors are described: 3. The judge is named. II. That God will bring us into judgment. 1. All will be judged: some will be glad, others will shrink; 2. God will

bring all into judgment. III. God will bring us into judgment for all these things. The heart prompts to many evil ways. Name two. 1. Of infidelity; 2. Of sensuality.[b]

A thoughtless soldier.—Dr. John Evans, the author of some excellent sermons on the Christian temper, introduced, on one occasion, a sermon to young people in the following manner:—"Shall I be allowed to preface this discourse with relating a passage concerning an acquaintance of mine, who has been many years dead, but which I remember to have received, when young, from himself? When he was an apprentice in this city, the civil war began; his inclination led him into the army, where he had a captain's commission. It was fashionable for all the men of that army to carry a Bible along with them; which, therefore, he and many others did, who yet made little use of it, and hardly had any sense of serious religion. At length he was commanded, with his company, to storm a fort, wherein they were, for a short time, exposed to the thickest of the enemy's fire. When he had accomplished this enterprise, and the heat of the action was over, he found that a musket ball had lodged in his Bible, which was in his pocket, upon such a part of his body, that it must necessarily have proved mortal to him, had it not been for this seasonable and well-placed piece of armour. Upon a nearer observation he found the ball had made its way so far in his Bible as to rest directly upon that part of the first unbroken leaf where the words of my text are found. It was Ec. xi. 2; 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' As the surprising deliverance, you may apprehend, much affected him, so a passage which his conscience told him was very apposite to his case, and which Providence in so remarkable a way pointed to his observation, made the deepest and best impression on his mind; and, by the grace of God, he, from that time, attended to religion in earnest, and continued in the practice of it to a good old age; frequently making the remark, with pleasure, that his Bible had been the salvation both of his body and his soul."[c]

tites, indulge all thy passions, deny thyself nothing, eat, drink, and be merry; disregard the admonitions of conscience, trample under foot the authority of revelation, but think not that thou shalt always prosper in the ways of sin, or carry for ever that air of jollity and triumph."—*J. A. James.*

Ro. ii. 6—9.

v. 9. *H. Smith*, 125; *Bp. S. Ward*, 241; *Bp. Stillingfleet*, iii. 152; *Dr. J. Edwards*, 617; *Bp. Hickman*, ii. 277; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, ii. 189; *S. Smith*, 209; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 523.

[b] *Omega* in 100 Sks.

"Knowledge, when wisdom is too weak to guide her, is like a headstrong horse that throws the rider."—*Quarles.*

[c] *R. T. S.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1. remember, think on: keep ever before thee the law of **thy** Creator. **Creator,** Heb. plur. *Creators:* perhaps as intimating God's relation to all the different parts of our being. He who makes has right of rule over the thing made. **evil days,** times of trouble wh. too surely come in man's advanced years. **no pleasure,** *etc., i.e.* the time of old age, when the senses are dulled.

Early piety (*v.* 1).—I. How you are called to remember your Creator. 1. Who He is; 2. What He has done; 3. What He is doing; 4. What He has promised to do; 5. What He has determined to do. II. When He should be especially remembered. 1. Youth is the most impressible time—most critical; 2. Most honourable to serve God then; 3. Most profitable. III. Why it should not be deferred. 1. Evil days; 2. Old age has its peculiar infirmities, remarkable incapacity for improvement.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Donne*, vi. 17; *H. Smith*, 184; *O. Heywood*, v. 519; *Sir M. Hale*, ii. 325; *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 285; *Abp. Tillotson*, iv. 76; *Dr. J. Trapp*, ii. 1; *Dr. J. Evans*, 79; *J. Fawcett*, 166; *Dr. J. Milner*, 53; *J. Holland*, i. 386; *Dr. J. Jortin*, iv. 217; *G. Whitefield*, v. 159; *Bp. Porteus*, iii. 177; *Bp. Colenso*, 72; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 305; *Dr. T. Dwight*, ii. 155.

Note :—Nothing in religion can be done without Christ; all to which we are called may be done with Him.[a]

Early piety.—Many a one, who lives to a good old age, remembered Him in the days of youth; and for not a few, dying early, have these words supplied the theme of funeral meditation. In one instance the verse, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," itself was both funeral sermon and obituary. A letter received in New York from Atlanta, Ga., gives this incident of the battle at Bull Run: "A staff-officer from Charleston, engaged in the battle on the 21st July, 1861, says: 'I rode out the day after the battle to view the ground, and passed piles of dead in various positions. Under a large tree I saw a body lying, very handsomely dressed, with a fancy sword, and a handkerchief over the face. It attracted my curiosity. I stopped, removed the handkerchief, and saw one of the handsomest faces I ever met with, of a boy not more than twelve or fourteen years old. His appearance and dress indicated high social position: probably he was a temporary aid to some general officer. To ascertain who he was, I examined his pockets, and found a Testament, in which was written, "James Simmons, New York. From his loving mother. My son, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." I wished very much to take the body away, but I was six miles from quarters, on horseback, and it was impossible.'"

2—4. (2) **not darkened,**[a] by reason of weakness or disease, which prevents their enjoyment. **clouds . . rain,** fig. for trouble coming again and again.[b] (3) **keepers,**[c] *etc.*, the arms, with the hands, wh. become tremulous in the aged. **strong men,** the legs, wh. in age lose their muscular power. **grinders,**[c] or teeth. Fem. gender, bec. work of hand-mill was done by women. **look . . windows,** the eyes; sight of the aged is dim. (4) **doors,** *etc.*, the lips, in allusion to the silent mumbling of their food by those who have lost their teeth. **rise . . bird,** wake with the least sound, so light is his sleep. Or allusion may be to his voice becoming weak as a bird's. **daughters . . low,** he can no longer sing, or join in singing, or even care for singing.

Description of old age.—We have here an elegant description of old age. "Then the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, will be darkened." That is, all outward comfort and prosperity, whether by day or by night, will be eclipsed and withdrawn. "And the clouds will return after the rain." That is, one bodily distemper and trouble will follow another in quick succession. Then will "the keepers of the house tremble." That is, the arms and hands, which defend the body, will by reason of their cold and dry temper shake and quiver. "And the strong men will bow themselves." That is, the thighs and legs, which have strongly borne up the structure of the body, will be weak, and need the support of a staff to assist them. "And the grinders will cease because they are few." That is, the teeth, which chew and grind our food, will break, decay, and fall out: so that, being reduced to a few, they will be unable to do their office. "And those who look out at the windows will be darkened." That is, the sight will fail; the eye, through which, as through a window, the soul looks out, being dim and weakened. "And the doors shall be shut in the streets." That is, the lips and mouth will be disabled from speaking and eating.

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[a] *R. Cecil.*

Childhood does sometimes pay a second visit to man—youth never. How responsible are we for the use of a period so precious in itself, which will soon pass away and never return.

"You are old; nature in you stands on the very verge of her confine."—*Shakespeare.*

"Years steal fire from the mind as vigour from the limb."—*Byron.*

a The darkening of the lights of heaven denotes a time of affliction and sadness. Comp. Job iii. 9; Is. v. 30; Eze. xxxii. 7, 8. Contrast 2 Sa. xxiii. 4, 5.

b "The season of weakness and decrepitude, when no sooner has one cloud of sorrow discharged its dark contents and disappeared, but another black cloud, swollen with showers of sorrows, returns in its place."—*Wordsworth.*

c Some, *e.g.*, *Umbreit, Elster, Cox*, think this and foll. *vv.* a poetic description of the day of death, represented under fig. of a fearful tempest.

d Ex. xi. 5; Mat. xxiv. 41.

"Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years, when nature

"When the sound of the grinding is low." That is, digestion, which is assisted by chewing, will be weak and imperfect, so that the system will be ill supplied with nourishment. "And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird." That is, our sleep will be shallow, that the least noise will awake us, and so short, that it will prevent the cock crowing. "And all the daughters of music shall be brought low." That is, our ears will grow dull, so that the sweetest music will have lost all its charms. "And they shall be afraid of that which is high." That is, we shall, by reason of weariness, dizziness, and want of breath, be afraid of ascending high places, and of attempting such high things as in youth we adventured upon without hesitation. "And fears shall be in the way." That is, we shall be afraid in our journeying, lest we dash our weak and weary foot against a stone. "And the almond tree shall flourish." That is, our head will grow white, like the almond tree, which soon ripens. "And the grasshopper shall be a burden." That is, the least weight will be too heavy for our infirm body; yea, we, being then like enough to grasshoppers, shall be a burden both to ourselves and to others. "And desire shall fail." That is, all our bodily appetites will cool and cease. At length "the silver cord will be loosed." That is, the backbone, with the spinal marrow which it encloses, and the nerves and fibres belonging to it, will be weakened. "And the golden bowl will be broken." That is, the vessel and membrane in which the brain is enclosed (which is aptly called "golden," both for its colour and value) will at last be shattered. "And the pitcher will be broken at the fountain." That is, the veins will cease from doing their office at the right ventricle of the heart, which is the fountain of life; and so, our blood stagnating, we are soon extinguished. "And the wheel shall be broken at the cistern." That is, the great artery, which is knit to the left side of the heart, by which the blood is conveyed into the system generally, ceases its action, and the pulse with it, which are the immediate forerunners of death. And "then the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it." Thus we see man's body, like some curious edifice, first battered by various storms; at length the roof and walls decay; and at last it falls to the ground; but our blessed Redeemer hath provided for the inhabitant "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."[e]

5, 6. (5) **high**, prob. high ground. The aged cannot ascend hills.[a] **fears**, nervously dreads any journeying: wants to be left quietly at home. **almond**, wh. bears white flowers.[b] **grasshopper**, or locust. Even an insect is felt a burden to the weak old man. **desire**, *lit.* the *caper berry*, wh. was eaten before meals to provoke appetite; even it would no longer have its effect. **long home**, so the grave is conceived.[c] (6) **silver cord**, by wh. the house-lamp was hung from the ceiling.[d] **bowl**, the lamp itself. **pitcher**, the body compared to an earthen vessel.[e] **wheel**, the cistern wheel by wh. the bucket is lowered and raised; illus. the vital processes of the body.

The grasshopper.—Sir Thomas Gresham, who built the Royal Exchange in London, was the son of a poor woman, who, while he was an infant, abandoned him in a field. By the providence of God, however, the chirping of a grasshopper attracted a boy to brought him to the door of death."—*Shakespeare.*

"When every day that comes, comes to decay a day's work in us."—*Ibid.*

"Time's chariot-wheels make their carriage-road in the fairest face."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

"These are the effects of doting age, vain doubts, and idle cares, and over-caution; the second nonage of a soul more wise, but now decay'd, and sunk into the socket, peeping by fits, and giving simple light."—*Dryden.*

e R. Smith.

"I am old now, and these same crosses spoil me."—*Shakespeare.*

"Every man desires to live long; but no man would be old."—*Swift.*

a "Of ascending an eminence wh. would be difficult on account of their sunken chests and short breath."—*O. Zöckler.*

b "It is the type of old age whose hair is white;... the white blossoms completely cover the whole tree; the green leaves do not appear till some time after."—*Thomson.*

the spot where the child lay; and his life was by this means preserved. After Sir Thomas had, by his unparalleled success as a merchant, risen to the pinnacle of commercial wealth and greatness, he chose a grasshopper for his crest; and becoming, under the patronage of Queen Elizabeth, the founder of the Royal Exchange, his crest was placed on the walls of the building in several parts, and a vane or weathercock, in the figure of a grasshopper, was fixed on the summit of the tower.

7. **dust,** Ge. iii. 19. The body formed of dust. **spirit,** *etc.*, a clear intimation of belief in immortality of the soul.[a]

The individuality of the soul (*v.* 7).—I. Nothing is more difficult to realise than that every man has a distinct soul. II. All the souls that have passed away from earth are alive yet. III. Every one of all the souls which have ever been on the earth is in one of two distinct states,—one the subject of God's favour; the other under His wrath. IV. All souls now living are on the way to one or other of these states. V. How is it with us?[b]

A little boy's mistake.—A little girl in Yorkshire, about seven years of age, went, accompanied by a brother younger than herself, to see an aunt who lay dead. On their return home, the little boy expressed his surprise that he had seen his aunt, saying, "I always thought when people were dead that they went to heaven; but my aunt is not, for I saw her." "Brother," replied his sister, "I fear you do not understand it: it is not the body that goes to heaven; it is 'the think' that goes to heaven; the body remains, and it is put into the grave, where it sleeps till God shall raise it up again."

8—10. (8) **all is vanity,** a conclusion fr. looking at all features of life. (9) **knowledge,** gave practical counsel for the ordering of life while we have it. (10) **acceptable words,** *Heb.* words of delight: pleasant, agreeable.

Acceptable words.—The following anecdote, related by Dr. Franklin, which is equally characteristic of the preacher and himself, admirably illustrates the power of Mr. Whitefield's eloquence:—"I happened," says the doctor, "to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish—gold and all. At this sermon there was also one of our club, who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came from home. Towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbour, who stood near him, to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was made to, perhaps, the only man in the company who had the coldness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, 'At any other time, friend Hodgkinson, I would lend to thee freely; but not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right senses.'"

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c "The ancient Egyptians called their tombs their 'long home,' or 'everlasting habitations.'" —*Gadsby.*
d The thread of life.
e 2 Cor. iv. 7.

a "The spirit of every man after death, good or bad, in some sense goes to God either as a Father or as a Judge, to be kept somewhere under the custody of His Almighty power, in order to the receiving of His final sentence at the last judgment, either of happiness or misery."—*Bp. Bull.*

b *Dr. J. H. Newman.*

v. 8. *Bp. Maltby,* i. 480; *Dr. H. Blair,* ii. 178.

"The vanity of the world also appears in this, that a little cross will embitter great comforts... One dead fly is enough to corrupt a whole box of the world's most fragrant ointment. There are so many ingredients required to make up worldly felicity—as riches, health, honour, friends, good name, and the like—that if these be wanting the whole composition is spoiled."—*Hopkins.*

"Old age is talkative, and I may learn somewhat of moment from him."—*Whitehead.*

a *R. T. S.*

11, 12. (11) goads, used by herdsmen to drive on cattle. nails, or tent-pegs. The allusion is to their being driven into, and fixed in, the memory. masters of assemblies,[a] or tent-makers: those who erect tents: a fig. for teachers or preachers. one shepherd, God, the one source of wisdom for all teachers. (12) many books, as the result of much effort to force out the secrets of life: full of your own anxious but vain speculations. The counsel is to be willing to receive revealed truth; and not weary the mind with mere speculations. study,[b] eager curiosity.

Teaching to purpose.—Interpretation of the text (*v.* 11).—Orton thus paraphrases this text:—"The words of the preacher are not only true, but affecting; like goads, quickening us to duty, or like nails, that take fast hold, and leave an abiding impression upon the mind, when drawn by the masters of the assemblies, the preachers of truth; which are given from one shepherd, an allusion to the master shepherd, who gives a goad to him who drives the plough, or a nail to him that is to repair a building."—*Pericles.*—It is said of Pericles, the Athenian orator, that before he went out to address the people, he prayed to the gods that nothing might go out of his mouth but what might be to the purpose. What an example does this heathen set for the Christian preacher and teacher! How much is uttered by these public instructors which, as far as any one can see, is to no purpose whatever except to fill up the hour!—*Words not wasted.*—A deaf man was remarkable for his accurate knowledge of almost all subjects which depended particularly upon his interconrse with others. He was once asked the reason of this, when he replied, "People do not waste their breath talking nonsense to me through a speaking-trumpet." If they had anything to say, it was always to the purpose, and put in the fewest possible words. The Christian teacher should set before him a direct purpose, a great and lofty object, and make everything bear upon it. His great aim is to explain God's truth, and apply it to the saving of the souls of his scholars.

13, 14. (13) conclusion, a very limited and imperfect one: not such as David would have arrived at: not such as Christianity teaches. The fear of God, as the practical rule of life, may be, and should be, glorified into the *love of God* as the inward inspiration of life. whole . . man, *i.e.* this is man's part: the mysteries he must be willing to leave. (14) into judgment, Ro. ii. 16, xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.[a]

The whole duty of man (*v.* 13).—This is real religion. I. It is the design of man's creation. II. The object of God's providential dispensation. III. The chief excellency of man's character. IV. The sole foundation of his happiness. V. It harmonises with all his circumstances.

Photographs on the wall.—The infinite galleries of the past await but one brief process, and all their pictures will be called out and fixed for ever. I had a curious illustration of this great fact on a humble scale. When a bookcase, long standing in one place, was removed, there was the exact image left on the wall of the whole, and of many of its portions. But in the midst of this picture was another, the precise outline of a map which had hung on the wall before the bookcase was placed there. We had all forgotten everything about the map until we saw its photograph on the wall. Thus, some day or another, we may remember

[a] "The master of assemblies is the sheikh, who orders the gathering together of the tent dwellers, and the pitching of the encampment."—*Van Lennep.*

[b] "This is only the discouragement of the prurient and roving curiosity which is always craving something new, however pernicious and poisonous, and devours it with ravenous avidity, and has no appetite for what is old, however wholesome it may be."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 11. *Dr. R. Fiddes*, 143.

v. 12. *M. A. Meilan*, i. 102; *Dr. J. Trapp*, i. 297.

"Knowledge always desires increase: it is like fire, which must be first kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself."—*Johnson.*

[a] "Because God is infinitely just, He will neither let hidden evil be unpunished, nor hidden good be unrewarded."—*Wolle.*

"We shall see of what vast consequence it is to us that we be religious, if we consider the account we must every one of us shortly give of himself to God; thence he argued against a voluptuous and vicious life (ch. xi. 9), and here for a religious life."—*Mat. Henry*

vv. 13, 14. *Dr. T. Dwight*, ii. 340; *Bp. Jackson*, 82.

a sin which has been covered up, when this lower universe is pulled away from before the wall of infinity, where the wrong-doing stands self-recorded.[b]—*Character—its importance to the young.*—The young grow up and go into the world and take their places there often with little feeling of another world, and how they stand in relation to it. Their characters are formed, as it might seem, by chance, and the tastes and opinions of the accidental society into which they are thrown. And no doubt such influences are very potent. They are the enveloping atmosphere of character, silently feeding and rounding the outlines of its growth. But withal, its true springs are deeper,—"Out of the heart are the issues of life." The soul within is the germ of the unfolding man, no less than the seed is that of the plant, fashioned and fed as it may be by the outer air. And the *essential form* of character will be found in every case to depend upon the nature of the inner life from which it springs. Whether this be dull and torpid, or quick and powerful, will very soon show itself in the outward fashion of the man. The mere surface of many lives may look equally fair, but there will be found to be a great difference, according as some hold to a higher life, and draw their most central and enduring qualities thence, and as others are found to have no higher attachment—no living spring of Divine righteousness and strength. What is deepest in every man, and most influential, however little at times it may seem so, is, after all, his relation to God and the Unseen. The genuine root of character is here, as trial soon proves. How a man believes concerning God and the higher world—how his soul is—will show itself in his whole life. From this inner source, its essential and determining qualities will run. On this foundation its structure rests. The religious belief of young men, therefore, is a subject of the most vital moment for themselves and for all. Whatever tends to affect it is pregnant with incalculable consequences. To weaken or lose it, is to impair the very life of society. To deepen and expand it, is to add strength to character and durability to virtue.[c]—*Moth-eaten characters.*—We do well to remember that a little tooth, which is almost too small for the microscope, may nevertheless be large enough to cut one thread, and another thread, and another thread; and when you have begun to cut threads, you have begun to make holes; and when you have begun to make holes, the destruction of the garment is at hand; and a character that is moth-eaten, that has begun to be pierced by petty sins and vices, is weakened, and is being prepared for destruction.[d]

b O. W. Holmes. "Deeper than the judgment, deeper than the feelings, lies the seat of human character—in that which is the mystery of all beings and all things, in what we call their 'nature,' without knowing where it lies, what it is, or how it wields its power. All we know is, that it does exert a power over external circumstances, bending them all in its own direction, or breaking its instruments against what it cannot bend. The nature of an acorn turns dews, air, soils, and sunbeams to oak; and though circumstances may destroy its power, they cannot divert it while it survives. It defies man, beast, earth, and sky, to make it produce elm. Cultivation may affect its quality, and training its form; but whether it shall produce oak, ash, or elm, is a matter into wh. no force from without can enter—a matter not of circumstances, but purely of nature. To turn nature belongs to the Power which originally fixed nature." — *W. Arthur.*

c Tullock.

d Beecher.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

Introduction.

I. Author. Ascribed to Solomon by universal voice of antiquity; this "Song of Songs"—that is, *The Best of Songs*—the only one left of the 1,005 written by Solomon. (1 Kings iv. 32.) **II. Authenticity.** It is suggested (*Bp. Warburton*) that there can be no doubt of its canonicity, since Ezra, who compiled the canon, acted by inspiration of the Most High. Although not quoted in the New Testament, it formed part of the Jewish Scriptures (*Jos. Antiq.* viii. 2—5), was included in the translation of the LXX., and in all ancient catalogues. It is also attested by *Origen*, *Jerome*, *Theodoret*, and the *Talmud*. **III. Structure.** A poem; but critics are not agreed as to the class of Hebrew poetry in which it should be placed. The following are some of the chief opinions:—A poem to inculcate the Divine approbation of marriage (*Michaelis*); a representation, by Solomon's son, of a trial of skill between a shepherd and a shepherdess (*Mendelssohn*); a nuptial song (*Harmer*); a regular drama, which is to be explained by the consideration that the Jews were wont to celebrate their nuptials for seven days together, distinguished by peculiar solemnities (*Bossuet*, with whom agree *Calmet*, *Bp. Percy*, and *Mr. Williams*); an idyll (*Bauer*); eight idylls (*Jahn*): a series of twelve sacred idylls, each distinct and independent of the other (*Dr. Good*, and mainly of the same opinion is *Sir W. Jones*). "It is a poem, in which there are two characters, a male (*Shelomoh*, Peace), and a female called by the same name with a female termination (*Shulamith*). There are treble and bass solos, which occasionally glide into a duet (ii. 7, iii. 5, viii. 4), terminating in a chorus of virgins (iii. 6—11, v. 9, vi. 1, 13, viii. 5, 8, 9). The sonnet of each of the two principal characters is not distinguished in our translation, as it is in the Hebrew, by the use of the masculine and feminine pronouns and adjectives; but they may be thus marked: Shulamith begins a treble solo (i. 2—6), followed by a dialogue or duet (of about a verse each, to ii. 3), terminating in the duet (ii. 6, 7). Then Shulamith sings a solo (ii. 8—13), answered by Shelomoh (chap. vii.), in praise of his spouse. The two intervening chapters (v. and vi.) appear to be sung by Shulamith and the chorus, and chap. viii. by them altogether in chorus. . . . Shelomoh would seem to be a personification of 'Salem' (Jerusalem), and this ode would thus portray the yearning of the bereaved Israelitish Church towards the holy temple on Mount Zion, after the separation of the ten tribes. This more fitly typifies the love between the Church and Christ than an 'Epithalamium' on the marriage of Solomon with a heathen princess; while the terms of endearment lose all their grossness when applied to two nations with their distinctive physical features—a view which the constant transition (in the original Hebrew) from the singular to the plural (or collective) pronouns strengthens" (*Oxford Teacher's Bible*).

Synopsis.

Bossuet, Bp. of Meaux, is of opinion that this Song is a regular drama, explained by the Jews celebrating their nuptials for seven days together. He accordingly divides it in the following manner:—Day 1, Chapter i.—ii. 6: Day 2, ii. 7—17: Day 3, iii.—v. 1: Day 4, v. 2—vi. 9: Day 5, vi. 10—vii. 11: Day 6, vii. 12—viii. 3: Day 7, viii. 4—14. With Bossuet agrees Calmet, Bp. Percy, and Mr. Williams. Dr. Good, after others, considers it as forming not one continued and individual poem, but a series of sacred idyls, 12 in number, thus:—Idyl 1, Chap. i. 1—8: Idyl 2, i. 9—ii. 7: Idyl 3, ii. 8—17: Idyl 4, iii. 1—5: Idyl 5, iii. 6—iv. 7: Idyl 6, iv. 8—v. 1: Idyl 7, v. 2—vi. 10: Idyl 8, vi. 11—13: Idyl 9, vii. 1—9: Idyl 10, vii. 10—viii. 4: Idyl 11, viii. 5—7: Idyl 12, viii. 8—14.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) song of songs, *i.e.* the chief of songs. Sol. wrote "one thousand and five songs,"[a] but this one only is preserved. which is Solomon's, lit. *to*, or *for*, Solomon Usually regarded as ascribing the authorship to Sol.[b] (2) kiss me, the almost universal sign of personal affection[c] bet. blood-relations and friends. better than wine, which was regarded as "making glad the heart." (3) savour . . ointments, these were freely used in dressing for entertainments,[d] poured forth, and so the sweetness flows abroad. virgins, all the court ladies are admirers of the brilliant and lovely king.

The Church's love to Christ (*vv.* 3, 4).—There are two points for our consideration. I. The reason of the Church's love for Christ. 1. His name; 2. On account of the fragrance diffused by His name. II. Her ardent desire after Him. 1. Her supplication; 2. Her resolution. Learn—(1) What reason we have to seek the knowledge of Christ; (2) In what way we should testify our regard for Him.[e]

Altogether lovely.—Jesus Christ is comprehensive of all things that are lovely: He seals up the sum of all loveliness: things that shine as single stars with a particular glory, all meet in Christ, as a glorious constellation. Cast your eyes among all created beings; survey the universe; observe strength in one, beauty in a second, faithfulness in a third, wisdom in a fourth; but you shall find none excelling in them all, as Christ doth. Bread hath one quality, water another, physic another; but none hath all in itself, as Christ hath. He is bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a garment to the naked, healing to the wounded, and whatsoever a soul can desire is found in Him.[f]

The study of the life of Christ.—If any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity, do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them: the study and endeavour of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being Christ's disciples, and votaries of that most holy institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of Him who is our master and author of our faith. If we have in us any wisdom or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible Guide, designed by heaven to lead us in the straight, even, and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Christ, and are affected with the innocent, sweet, and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to Christ; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best friend, our most gracious Redeemer; let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to Him; let a lively image of His most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life be ever present to our fancies; so as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purposes,

a 1 Ki. iv. 32.

Luther calls this "The High Song."

b "In many Ps. the same Heb. particle occurs in the title as a sign of authorship."—*Spk. Com.*

c "For a king to permit his hands, or even garment, to be kissed, was counted a great honour, but that he should himself kiss another *with his mouth* is the greatest honour."—*Fausset.*

"Every precept of Christ received by His Church is as one of His kisses."—*St. Gregory.*

d Jno. xii. 3.

See Hansard Knollys, Expos. of cap. i.

v. 1. *R. Sibbes, 2 Ser.* 1639; *Bp. W. Nicholson, Apos. Creed*, 141.

e C. Simeon, M.A.

f J. Flavel.

"In the beautiful character of the blessed Jesus there was not a more striking feature than a certain sensibility, which disposed Him to take part in every one's affliction to which He was a witness, and to be ready to afford it a miraculous relief. He was apt to be particularly touched by instances of domestic distress, in which the suffering arises from those feelings of friendship, growing out of natural

affection and habitual endearment, which constitute the perfection of man as a social creature, and distinguish the society of the human kind from the instinctive herdings of the lower animals."—*Bishop Horsley.*

g I. Barrow.

to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend, and sanctify our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate upon the best of histories, wherein the tenor of His divine practice is represented to us. Revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them on our memories, and striving to express them in our conversation, let us endeavour continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and "to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Which that we may be able to do, do thou, O blessed Redeemer, draw us; draw us by the cords of Thy love; draw us by the sense of Thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of Thy person; draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of Thy example; draw us by the merit of Thy gracious death, and by the power of Thy holy Spirit; draw us, "good Lord, and we shall run after thee."[g]

4—6. (4) **draw me**, by some look or motion of love that will give me encouragement. **run**, immediately and earnestly responding to such a love-sign.[a] **king . . chambers**, the expression of wonder at the grace thus shown to her.[b] **upright**, *etc.*, better, "uprightly do they (the virgins) love thee." (5) **black**, swart, or dark-hued. "The Arabs of the desert are browned by constant exposure to the sun." **tents of Kedar**,[c] Ge. xxv. 13. **curtains**, *i.e.* comely as the curtains, or rich hangings, of Sol.'s tent. (6) **sun . . me**, exposure to the sun being the cause of her dark tints. **angry**, or jealous of me. **keeper**, *etc.*, thinking to keep me safe by finding work for me. **mine own vineyard**, her beauty, wh. the king having seen, had won for himself.

The cry of the bride (*v.* 4).—I. The request. It is—1. Earnest; 2. Constant; 3. Believing; 4. Personal; 5. Unconditional. II. The promise—"We will run," etc. Notice this promise in its—1. Boldness; 2. Greatness; 3. Humility; 4. Object. III. How the request is answered. Jesus draws by—1. Silence; 2. A look; 3. A word; 4. By former promises brought to mind; 5. By afflictions; 6. By the ordinances.[d]

Black but comely.—There is a double principle in a Christian in all things that he doth: there is the flesh and spirit, and these two issue out in whatsoever comes from him. In his good words there is flesh as well as spirit, in his thoughts and desires, in his prayer; his prayer itself stands in contraries. So everything that comes from him is tainted with that that is contrary; the flesh opposeth and hinders the work of the Spirit, and so it stains our good works. A Christian, at the same time, is deformed and well-favoured, black in regard of sin, but well-favoured in regard of the Spirit of God, and the acceptation of Christ.[e]

7, 8. (7) **thou feedest**, this sentence indicates her fear of a public reception, and desire to meet the king privately. **rest at noon**,[a] lie down during the oppressive hours. **turneth aside**, going astray, not knowing where her beloved one was. (8) **if**, *etc.*, answer taken up by the chorus of women. Perhaps spoken with a slight tone of irony.[b] **footsteps**, *i.e.* watch and follow the tracks, and you will soon find out. **kids**, the satire of this is seen when we note that the kids of the flock are given in charge to the little boys and girls, who lead them a short distance off, or suffer them to feed among the tents of the encampment.

a Comp. Jno. vi. 44, xii. 32.
b "A simple expression of the virgin's rapturous joy at the high honour and delight granted her by the king."—*O. Zöckler.*
c "The Arab tent is made of goat's hair cloth, always black, or of a dark brown, about three-fourths of a yard wide, manufactured by the women of the household, and cut in long strips, wh. are stitched together at the edges until the desired width is obtained. This tent cloth possesses the double advantage of being waterproof, and of absorbing the sun's rays, and it is thus actually cooler than the white tent of the more civilised traveller."—*Van Lennep.*
d Stems and Twigs.
e R. Sibbes.

a "The sheep are led to pasture only towards sunset during the greater part of the year, and return home in the morning, or spend the day, sometimes the

The saint and the Saviour (*vv.* 7, 8).—I. The address of the saint to the Saviour. 1. An acknowledgment of His love; 2. A longing for communion; 3. A dread of declension. II. The reply of the Saviour to the saint. 1. A slight reproof; 2. A warm expression of admiration; 3. A plain direction.[c]

The goat.—He is superior to the sheep both in sentiment and dexterity; he is stronger, lighter, and more agile than the ram; he is sprightly, capricious, and given to wander; and it is with difficulty he can be confined to a flock. He loves to retire into solitude, to climb steep and rugged places, to stand, even to sleep, on the points of rocks, and the edges of the most frightful precipices. He is robust and easily nourished; for he eats almost every herb, and is injured by a very inconsiderable number. Though he seems to feel the effects of severe cold, he is not afraid of rain, or storms, or too great a degree of heat; he cheerfully exposes himself to the sun, and without inconvenience sleeps under its most ardent rays. But he is inconstant in his passions, and irregular in his actions. He walks, stops short, runs, leaps, approaches, retires, shows and conceals himself, or flies off, as if he were actuated by mere caprice, and without any other cause than what arises from an eccentric vivacity of temper. The suppleness of his organs, and the strength and nervousness of his frame, are hardly sufficient to support the petulance and rapidity of his natural movements.[d]

9—11. (9) **compared,** *etc.*, this is the address of the king-lover. **company,** lit. *a mare of mine.* He compares his bride to a beautiful horse.[a] (10) **rows of jewels,** ornaments dangling from the bride's head-dress.[b] **chains,** *comp.* Eze. xvi. 11—13. (11) **studs,** points, little silver ornaments fixed on the necklace, or head-dress. "Disks of silver pierced and strung together." The bridegroom promises her addition to her ornaments.

Note on v. 9.—This appears a very coarse compliment, to a mere English reader, arising from the difference of our manners; but the horse is an animal in very high estimation in the East. The Arabians are extravagantly fond of their horses, and caress them as if they were their children. D'Arvieux gives a diverting account of the affectionate caresses an Arab used to give a mare which belonged to him. He had sold it to a merchant at Rama, and when he came to see it (which he frequently did), he would weep over it, kiss its eyes, and when he departed, go backwards, bidding it adieu in the most tender manner. The horses of Egypt are so remarkable for stateliness and beauty, as to be sent as presents of great value to the Sublime Porte; and it appears from sacred history that they were in no less esteem formerly among the kings of Syria, and of the Hittites, as well as Solomon himself, who bought his horses at 150 shekels, which (at Dean Prideaux's calculation of three shillings the shekel) is £22 10s. each, a very considerable price at which to purchase twelve thousand horses together. The qualities which form the beauty of these horses are tallness, proportionable corpulency, and stateliness of manner; the same qualities which they admire in their women, particularly *corpulency*, which is known to be one of the most esteemed characters of beauty in the East. Neibuhr says: "As plumpness is thought a beauty in the East, the women, in order to obtain this beauty, swallow, every

noon-day hours only, in the breezy shade of a friendly grove, or under booths prepared for the purpose."—*Van Lennep.*

b "It was jeeringly intended, and if it did not exactly wound her deeply, it was certainly adapted to increase her longing for her lover."—*O. Zöckler.*

v. 7. *Dr. J. Edwards, Gospel Treas.* 428; *S. Gough,* 187; *C. Bradley,* 236.

vv. 7, 8. *J. Jowitt,* 330.

c G. Brooks.

d Buffon.

a "The simile is peculiarly appropriate on the lips, or from the pen, of Sol., who first brought horses and chariots from Egypt. 1 Ki. x. 28, 29."—*Spk. Com.*

"On account of her youthful bloom, and her unaffected demeanour, whose lovely charms are still further heightened by the simple ornaments worn upon her head and neck."—*Delitzsch.*

b "Persian ladies wear two or three rows of pearls round the head, beginning on the forehead, and descending down the cheeks, and under the chin, so that their faces seem to be set in pearls."—*Olearius.*

"Give every kind of knowledge its due attention and respect; but what

science is to be compared to the knowledge of Christ crucified? Had a traveller lost his way in some desert, where he had wandered till he was fainting with hunger and thirst, for what would he first ask? for music, for paintings? No, he would ask for bread, for water! Anything else offered him would be a mockery of his misery."—*R. Cecil.*

morning and every evening, three of these insects (a species of *tenebriones*), fried in butter." Upon this principle is founded the compliment of Solomon; and it is remarkable that the elegant Theocritus, in his epithalamium for the celebrated queen Helen, whom he described as *plump* and *large*, uses exactly the same image, comparing her to *the horse in the chariots of Thessaly.*[c]

c Burder.

Divine love makes the soul better at obeying than disputing.

d Saunders.

Sympathy of Christ.—But if my dear husband, Christ, do for my trial leave me alone unto myself, alas! I know in what case I shall be then; but if for my proof He do so, yet I am sure He will not be long or far from me. Though he stand behind the wall and hide Himself, as Solomon says in his mystical ballad (Cant. ii.), yet will He peep in by a cleft to see how I do. He is so tender-hearted a Joseph, that though He speak roughly to His brethren, and handle them hardly, yea, and threatens grievous bondage to his best-beloved brother, Benjamin, yet He cannot contain Himself from weeping with us, and upon us, with falling on our necks and sweetly kissing us. Such, such a brother, is our Christ unto us all; wherefore hasten to go unto Him, as Jacob did, with his sons and family, leaving their own country and acquaintance. Yea, this our Joseph hath obtained for us His brethren, that Pharaoh the infidel shall minister unto us chariots wherein at ease we may be carried to come unto Him; as we have had experience how our very adversaries do help us unto our everlasting bliss by their speedy dispatch; yea, and how all things have been helping unto us, blessed be our God![d]

12—14. (12) at his table, lit. *in his circle*, couches being arranged in a circular form. spikenard,[a] costly oil with wh. the bride had scented herself. Perhaps intimating that she was doing all she could to render herself acceptable to him. (13) myrrh,[b] a costly myrrh-gum wh. the ladies of the East are in the habit of carrying in their bosom, perhaps in a little bag. he . . breasts, better rendered, "which (*i.e.* the myrrh) lodgeth in my bosom." (14) camphire, or henna,[c] used as dye; and the Orientals are extravagantly fond of the odour of the flowers.[d] Engedi, famed for its aromatic shrubs.[e]

a Obtained from an Indian plant now called *jatamansi.*

Jno. xii. 1—3.

b Ps. xlv. 8.

c Lawsonia Alba.

d Thomson.

e Jos. xv. 62; 1 Sa. xxiii. 29, xxiv. 1; 2 Chr. xx. 2; Eze. xlvii. 10.

v. 12. *T. Manton*, iii. 83; *D. Wilcox*, ii. 150; *J. Scott*, 227.

v. 13. *R. Robinson*, ii. 3.

A bundle of myrrh (*v.* 13).—Jesus is like a bundle of myrrh. I. Precious—a very valuable drug. II. Pleasant. III. Perfuming. IV. Preserving. V. A disinfectant. VI. A cure. VII. A beautifier. VIII. It was connected with sacrifice.[f]

A cluster of camphire.—This is the al-hennah, or cyprus. It is here mentioned as a perfume, and its clusters are noticed. This beautiful, odoriferous plant, if it is not annually cut and kept low, grows ten or twelve feet high, putting out its little flowers in clusters, which yield a most grateful smell, like camphire, and may therefore be alluded to (Cant. i. 14). Its plants, after they are dried and powdered, are disposed of to good advantage in all the markets of this kingdom of Tunis. For with this all the African ladies that can purchase it tinge their lips, hair, hands, and feet, rendering them thereby of a tawny, saffron colour, which, with them, is reckoned a great beauty. Russel mentions the same practice of dyeing their feet and hands with hennah as general among all sects and conditions at Aleppo. Hasselquist assures us he saw the nails of some mummies tinged with the al-hennah, which proves the antiquity of the practice. And as this plant does not appear to be a native of Palestine, but of India and Egypt, and seems mentioned (Cant. i. 14) as a curiosity

f C. H. Spurgeon.

"The blossoms of the henna are white, and grow in clusters. Their sweet perfume makes them special favourites with the women, who are fond of placing bunches of them in their

growing in the vineyards of Engedi, it is probable that the Jews might be acquainted with its use as a dye or tinge before they had experienced its odoriferous quality, and might, from the former circumstance, give it its name. See more concerning the hennah, or al-hennah, in Harmer's *Outlines of a New Commentary on Solomon's Song*, p. 218, etc *g*

15—17. (15) doves' eyes,[a] all Oriental poets are fond of doves' eyes. Comp. ch. v. 12. Some think the likeness of the bride's eyes is to doves, to the lustrous and shimmering plumage of the dove, not precisely to its eyes. (16) pleasant, "full of moral grace and charm." green, referring to their then sitting together on a flowery bank. No reference to a bed, as they were resting at noontide. (17) house, fancifully referring to the trees that hung over and shaded them, as if they were pillars and beams of a palace. rafters, or galleries; in allusion to the avenues of trees.

Most fair (*v.* 16).—I. Jesus is fair from every point of view. 1. How amiable in our trials; 2. In our afflictions; 3. In our persecutions. II. He is fair in all His offices. III. In every act of His life. IV. In every trait of His character. Learn to be constantly looking unto Jesus.

The eyes of the dove.—The eyes of a dove, always brilliant and lovely, kindle with peculiar delight by the side of a crystal brook, for this is her favourite haunt: here she loves to wash and to quench her thirst. But the inspired writer seems to intimate that, not satisfied with a single rivulet, she delights especially in those places which are watered with numerous streams, whose full flowing tide approaches the height of the banks, and offers her an easy and abundant supply. They seem as if they were washed with milk, from their shining whiteness; and fitly, rather fully set, like a gem set in gold, neither too prominent nor too depressed, but so formed as with nice adaptation to fill up the socket.[b]

a "The prominent features of her beauty, gentleness, and constant love, emblem of the Holy Ghost, who changes us to His own likeness."—*Fausset.*

v. 17. *R. Michell, Bamp. Lec.* 240.

"Your eye discourses with more rhetoric than all the gilded tongues of orators."—*Marmion.*

"What needs a tongue to such a speaking eye? that more persuades than winning oratory."—*Old Play, "Edward the Third."*

b *Paxton.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1, 2. (1) rose, prob. some plant with a bulbous root.[a] Evidently some wild flower is meant. Sharon, the most beautiful meadow land of Palestine. lily, not the white lily with wh. we are familiar, but the red lily,[b] or a red anemone. (2) among thorns, set off by the contrast. Thorny shrubs and plants abound in Palestine.

The lily among thorns (*v.* 2).—I. This illustrates the lavish bestowment of the love of God. II. It illustrates the power possessed by the love of Christ of rendering beautiful objects morally unsightly. III. It illustrates also the tenacity of Divine love. IV. It suggests also the jealousy and power of the love of Christ of and over all other and opposite plants and principles.

The rose of Sharon.—The plain of Sharon is still renowned for its fertility and beauty, though roses, properly speaking, do not grow there. The flower referred to is no doubt the cistus, which is found there in abundance, and is well known in our English gardens. It is supposed that the myrrh (ladanum) referred to in verse 13 of last chapter, as well as in Gen. xxxvii. 25, was the product of this plant. A writer in *Scripture*

a *Thomson* identifies with the *malva*, or marsh mallow.

Fausset says *meadow-saffron*, with flower of white or violet colour.

b "There is a wild flower extremely common in all Western Asia, which presents the appearance of a small tulip, while it is superior to it in beauty, and it is mistaken easily for it. In French

called the meadow anemone, and might deservedly be called the queen of the meadows. This delicate and graceful flower is remarkable for the great variety of colours it assumes; it is often seen of a bright scarlet, and of every shade of purple and pink, as well as straw colour and white."—*Van Lennep.*

vv. 1—4. *S. E. Pierce*, 101.

v. 2. *S. Lee, Eccles. Gemens.*

vv. 2, 3. *R. M'Cheyne*, 310.

c Sir R. K. Porter.

a Pr. xxv. 11; Joel i. 12.

"It is a generic word (like *malum* in Latin), and may include the citron and lemon."—*Wordsworth.*

b Delitzsch.

c Stems and Twigs.

"The bride, transplanted fr. a lowly station to new scenes of unwonted splendour, finds support and safety in the known attachment of her beloved. His "love" is her "banner."—*Spk. Com.*

Ps. lxv. 4.

v. 3. *T. Manton*, iii. 42; *T. Boston*, iii. 165; *R. Erskine*, ix. 60; *T. Blackley*, i. 212.

Natural History of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, speaking of the cistus, says:—"Several kinds of it produce a sweet-scented gum, called ladanum, which is thought to be the drug intended in two passages of the Book of Genesis, where the word is rendered myrrh. This gum was found sticking to the beards of goats, by the Arabs, who at length discovered that their charge had been feeding on the young branches of the cistus, and had procured the gum from them. After this the precious gum was obtained by passing leather whips over the shrubs, wounding but not destroying them; it was then allowed to dry on the whips, and afterwards carefully scraped off. It exudes most about sunrise. The gum is now used, mixed with frankincense, mace, and mint, as a strengthening plaster; while the more liquid juice is employed to produce sleep, being, in fact, tincture of opium."—"In the East this flower is extremely fragrant, and has always been much admired. In what esteem it was held by the ancient Greeks, may be seen in the *Odes of Anacreon*, and the comparisons in *Ecclus.* 24, 14, 18, L. 8, show that the Jews were likewise much delighted with it. 'In no country of the world does the rose grow in such perfection as in Persia; in no country is it so cultivated and prized by the natives. Their gardens and courts are crowded with its plants, their rooms ornamented with vases, filled with its gathered bunches, and every bath strewn with the full-blown flowers, plucked from the ever-replenished stems. Even the humblest individual, who pays a piece of copper money for a few whiffs of a kelioun, feels a double enjoyment when he finds it stuck with a bud from his dear native tree.'"[c]

3, 4. (3) **apple tree**, Heb. *tappuach*,[a] perhaps the *citron*, the *quince*, or the *orange*. Still, nothing can exceed the beauty of the apple tree, with its tinted blossoms and its rich fruits. **shadow**, a term more suited to the citron tree. (4) **banqueting house**, lit. *house of wine*, or "bower of delight." **banner**, *etc.*, "love waves as a protecting and comforting banner over my head when I am near Him."[b]

The hieroglyphic of love (*v.* 3).—The apple tree was the emblem of love. This emblem teaches us—I. The great superiority of Divine love. Consider—1. The majesty of Divine love; 2. The compass of Divine love; 3. The expressions of Divine love. II. The abundant provisions of Divine love. 1. Shelter; 2. Refreshment; 3. Enjoyment. III. The blessed freeness of Divine love, "I sat down," etc.[c]

The apple.—In the East the apple is of no value; and therefore seems by no means entitled to the praise with which it is honoured by the Spirit of inspiration. The inhabitants of Palestine and Egypt import their apples from Damascus, the produce of their own orchards being almost unfit for use. The tree, then, to which the spouse compares her Lord in the Song of Solomon, whose shade was so refreshing, and whose fruit was so delicious, so comforting, so restorative, could not be the apple tree, whose fruit can hardly be eaten; nor could the apple tree, which the prophet mentions with the vine, the fig, the palm, and the pomegranate, which furnished the hungry with a grateful repast, the failure of which was considered as a public calamity, be really of that species. "The vine is dried up, the fig tree languisheth, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree, also the apple

tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men." M. Forskall says the apple tree is extremely rare, and is named tyffah by the inhabitants of Palestine. In deference to his authority, the editor of *Calmet*, with every disposition to render the original term by the citron, is inclined to revert again to the apple. But if, as Forskall admits, the apple tree is extremely rare, it cannot, with propriety, be classed with the vine, and other fruit-bearing trees, that are extremely common in Palestine and Syria. And if it grow "with difficulty in hot countries," and required even the "assiduous attention" of such a monarch as Solomon, before it could be raised and propagated, an inspired writer certainly would not number it among the "trees of the field," which, as the phrase clearly implies, can live and thrive without the fostering care of man. The citron is a large and beautiful tree, always green, perfuming the air with its exquisite odour, and extending a deep and refreshing shade over the panting inhabitants of the torrid regions. Well, then, might the spouse exclaim: "As the citron tree among the trees of the wood; so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." A more beautiful object can hardly be conceived than a large and spreading citron, loaded with gold-coloured apples, and clothed with leaves of the richest green. Maundrell preferred the orange garden, or citron grove, at Beroot, the palace of the Emir Facardine, on the coast of Syria, to everything else he met with there, although it was only a large quadrangular plot of ground, divided into sixteen smaller squares; but the walks were so shaded with orange trees, of a large spreading size, and so richly adorned with fruit, that he thought nothing could be more perfect in its kind, or, had it been duly cultivated, could have been more delightful. When it is recollected that the difference between citron and orange trees is not very discernible, excepting by the fruit, both of which, however, have the same golden colour, this passage of Maundrell's may serve as a comment on the words of Solomon, quoted in the beginning of the section.[d] —Shade, according to Mr. Wood, in his description of the ruins of Balbec, is an essential article in Oriental luxury. The greatest people seek these refreshments, as well as the meaner. So Dr. Pococke found the patriarch of the Maronites (who was one of their greatest families) and a bishop sitting under a tree. Any tree that is thick and spreading doth for them; but it must certainly be an addition to their enjoying of themselves, when the tree is of a fragrant nature, as well as shady, which the citron tree is. Travellers there, we find in their accounts, have made use of plane trees, walnut trees, etc., and Egmont and Heyman were entertained with coffee at Mount Sinai, under the orange trees of the garden of that place. The people of those countries not only frequently sit under shady trees, and take collations under them, but sometimes the fruit of those trees under which they sit is shaken down upon them, as agreeableness. So Dr. Pococke tells us, when he was at Sidon, he was entertained in a garden, in the shade of some apricot trees, and the fruit of them was shaken upon him. He speaks of it indeed as if it was done as a great proof of their abundance, but it seems rather to have been designed as an agreeable addition to the entertainment.[e]

v. 4. *J. Shower*, i. 195; *J. C. Müller*, 220.

"That you may be beloved, be amiable."—*Ovid.* "Love will often make a wise man act like a fool."—*Greville.* "No cord or cable can draw so forcibly, or bind so fast, as love can do with only a single thread."—*Burton.* "Love sees what no eye sees; love hears what no ear hears; and what never rose in the heart of man, love prepares for its object."—*Lavater.* "The pleasure of love is in loving."—*La Rochefoucauld.* "They do not love that do not show their love."—*Shakespeare.* "Love is an alchemist, that can transmute poison into food."—*Bolton.* The classic poets represent love as blind.

d Paxton.

"The true one of youth's love proving a faithful helpmate in those years when the dream of life is over, and we live in its realities."—*Southey.* "Thou sweetest thing, that e'er did fix its lightly-fibred sprays to the rude rock, ah! wouldst thou cling to me? Rough and storm worn I am, yet love me as thou truly dost, I will love thee again with true and honest heart, though all unmeet to be the mate of such sweet gentleness" — *Joanna Baillie.*

e Harmer.

5—7. (5) flagons,[a] cakes of raisins, or dried grapes. comfort, or refresh me. apples, prob. the fruit we so name.[b] sick, feeling faint and exhausted, so as to need reviving food. Sickness of stomach is often one result of excited feeling. (6) left, *etc.*, the attitude of one who would support another when fainting and sick. (7) charge you, call upon you, adjure you. roes, or gazelles; these, with the hinds, are shy and gentle creatures, and she intimates that genuine love can as little bear to be disturbed as they.[c]

Note on v. 5.—Dr. Boothroyd:—"Support me with cordial; support me with citrons: for still I languish with love." Dr. A. Clarke:—"The versions in general understand some kind of ointments or perfumes by the first term," *i.e.* flagons. "Comfort me with apples:" they had not apples, as we in England; it is therefore probable that the citron or the orange (both of which are believed to be good for the complaint alluded to) is the fruit meant. "I am sick of love." Is it not amusing to see parents and physicians treating this affection as a disease of a very serious nature? It is called the *Cáma-Cáchal*, i.e. Cupid's fever, which is said to be produced by a wound inflicted by one of his five arrows. When a young man or woman becomes languid, looks thin, refuses food, seeks retirement, and neglects duties, the father and mother hold grave consultations; they apply to the medical man, and he furnishes them with medicines, which are forthwith to be administered, to relieve the poor patient. I believe the "versions in general" are right in supposing "ointments or perfumes" are meant, instead of flagons, because they are still considered to be most efficacious in removing the complaint. Thus, when the fever is most distressing, the sufferer is washed with rosewater, rubbed with perfumed oils, and the dust of sandal wood. The margin has, instead of comfort, "straw me with apples;" which probably means the citrons were to be put near to him, as it is believed they imbibe the heat, and consequently lessen the fever. It is also thought to be highly beneficial for the young sufferer to sleep on the tender leaves of the plantain tree (*banana*), or the lotus flowers; and if, in addition, strings of pearls are tied to different parts of the body, there is reason to hope the patient will do well.[d]

The antelope.—The antelope, like the hind, with which it is so frequently associated in Scripture, is a timid creature, extremely jealous and watchful, sleeps little, is easily disturbed, takes alarm on the slightest occasion; and the moment its fears are awakened, it flies, or seems rather to disappear, from the sight of the intruder. Soft and cautious is the step which interrupts not the light slumbers of this gentle and suspicious creature. It is probable, from some hints in the sacred volume, that the shepherd in the Eastern desert sometimes wished to beguile the tedious moments by contemplating the beautiful form of the sleeping antelope. But this was a gratification he could not hope to enjoy, unless he approached it with the utmost care, and maintained a profound silence. When, therefore, an Oriental charged his companion, by the antelope, not to disturb the repose of another, he intimated, by a most expressive and beautiful allusion, the necessity of using the greatest circumspection. This statement imparts a great degree of clearness and energy

a "The original term means grapes compressed into cakes, which were an article of food."—*Ayre.*

Hos. iii. 1. See also 1 Sa. xxx. 12

b "The agreeable and healthful qualities of the apples of Syria are celebrated by travellers and physiologists."—*Wordsworth.*

"The district of Askelon is especially celebrated for its apples, wh. are the largest and best I have ever seen in this country."—*Thomson.*

c "It is thought a gross rudeness in the East to awaken one sleeping, esp. a person of rank."—*Faussel.*

v. 7. "Here again the custom illustrates the passage; it would be considered barbarous in the extreme to awake a person out of his sleep. How often, in going to the house of a native, you are saluted with '*Nittera-kulla-karar,*' i.e. 'He sleeps.' Ask them to arouse him: the reply is, '*Koodatha,*' i.e. 'I cannot.' Indeed, to request such a thing shows at once that you are griffin, or new-comer. 'Only think of that ignorant Englishman: he went to the house of our chief, and being told he was asleep, he said he must see him, and actually made such a noise as to

to the solemn adjuration which the spouse twice addresses to the daughters of Jerusalem, when she charged them not to disturb the repose of her beloved one : "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes (the antelopes), and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." In this language, which is pastoral, and equally beautiful and significant, the spouse delicately intimates her anxiety to detain her Lord, that she may enjoy the happiness of contemplating His glory ; her deep sense of the evil nature and bitter consequences of sin ; her apprehension lest her companions, the members of her family, should by some rash and unholy deed provoke Him to depart : and how reasonable it was that they who coveted the society of that beautful creature, and were accustomed to watch over its slumbers in guarded silence, should be equally cautious not to disturb the communion which she then enjoyed with her Saviour.[e]

8, 9. (8) **voice**, or sound of his footstep.[a] (9) **wall**, "the clay-built wall of the house or vineyard of the bride's family." A different word from that meaning the strong wall of a city or fortress. **windows . . lattice**,[b] the beloved was looking in from the outside. **shewing himself**, *i.e.* peering or peeping.

The voice of the beloved (*v.* 8).—I. The beloved. Christ is—1. The beloved of the Father ; 2. Of the angels ; 3. Of His people. II. The revelation of the beloved—the voice. He reveals Himself—1. By His Word ; 2. By His Spirit dwelling in the heart. Note—This voice is pleasant, instructive, influential. III. The coming of Christ. 1. This was the language of primitive and expectant saints ; 2. He came by His incarnation ; 3. He comes to the penitent sinner ; 4. To the afflicted saint ; 5. He comes at death to receive the soul to glory ; 6. He will come in judgment to complete the salvation of His people.[c]

Windows in the East.—In Eastern countries the windows are made of lattice-work, so closely set together, that a person outside cannot see what is taking place within ; while any one within can see all that goes on outside. In the centre of this lattice work, however, there is a small door, opening on hinges, about the size of a face, through which a person can hold communication with any one outside. When one does not wish to be seen at the opening, or to communicate with the outside, he has only to step a little aside, where he is unobserved, though he can observe. "The mother of Sisera looked out at the window, and cried through the lattice," Judg. v. 28. Windows, in Eastern countries, from their peculiar construction, have thus suggested the images, so expressive and beautiful, used in many passages of Scripture.

10–13. (10) **rise up**, *etc.*, invitation to a time of fellowship. (11) **winter**, wh. keeps people within the house. **rain**, "for the six summer months rain rarely falls in Palestine." (12) **singing**, not merely of birds, though spring is the special time for their songs. **turtle**, a kind of dove,[a] wh. was a bird of passage in Palestine ; so its return indicated spring, as does the return of the cuckoo and the swallow with us. (13) **fig**, *etc.*, lit. "the fig tree spices its fruit."[b] **vines**, when just in blossom.

A song of three eras (*vv.* 12, 13).—We may regard these words—I. As a prophetic song of the first advent, when the winter of

awake him ; and then laughed at what he had done.'"—*Roberts. d Roberts.*

"The desire of power to excess caused angels to fall ; the desire of knowledge to excess caused man to fall : but in charity is no excess, neither can man nor angels come into danger by it."—*Bacon.*

e Paxton.

a "We have started up and sent leaping over the plain another of Sol.'s favourites. What elegant creatures those gazelles are, and how gracefully they bound! These lovely harts are very timid, and descend at night to the plains to feed among the lilies until the day-break, and the shadows flee away."—*Thomson.*

b "Windows of female members of the household are screened with lattice-work made of narrow slats of wood, arranged diagonally at right angles with each other, and so close together that persons within can see without being seen."—*Van Lennep.*

c Pulpit Themes.

a "The more common species of turtle-doves come up from the south in the early spring, and gradually fill the whole land, not only of Palestine and Syria, but the whole Peninsula of Asia Mi-

nor."—*Van Lennep.*

b Figs in the Holy Land ripen about the end of June.

"This description of spring has not perhaps its equal in any of our poets (Greek or Latin)."—*Mercier.*

vv. 10—13. *T. Pierce*, 110; *T. Jones*, 283.

vv. 12, 13. *F. Oakeley*, 245.

v. 13. *R. Erskine*, ix. 205.

c Stems and Twigs.

d Paxton.

"A lover's hope resembles the bean in the nursery tale; let it once take root, and it will grow so rapidly, that, in the course of a few hours, the giant Imagination builds a castle on the top, and by-and-by comes Disappointment with the curtal axe, and hews down both the plant and the superstructure."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

e I. Walton.

exclusiveness and moral darkness was past. II. As an experimental song of Christ's advent to the soul. III. As a prophetic song of the final glory. 1. Be patient, the winter will soon be past; 2. Be diligent; 3. Be appreciative; 4. Be earnest, think of the winter of the ungodly.[c]

Note on v. 10.—The Orientals distinguish their winter into two parts, or rather the depth of winter, from the commencement and termination of the season, by the severity of the cold. This, which lasts about forty days, they call Murbania. To this rigorous part of the season the wise man seems to refer in that beautiful passage of the Song: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." If we explain this text by the natural phenomena, these words, "the rain is over and gone," cannot be considered as an exposition of the preceding clause, "for, lo, the winter is past:" and as denoting that the moist part of the year was entirely gone, along with which, Dr. Russel assures us, all rural delights abandon the plains of Syria; but the meaning is, that the Murbania, the depth of winter, is past and over, and the weather become agreeably warm; the rain has just ceased, and consequently has left the sure and agreeable prospect of undisturbed and pleasant serenity for several days. It had been no inducement to the spouse to quit her apartments with the view of enjoying the pleasures of the country, to be told that the rainy season had completely terminated, and the intense heats of summer, under which almost any plant and flower sickens and fades away, had commenced.[d]

Singing of birds.—"But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such loud music out of her little instrumental throat, that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have very often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, 'Lord, what music hast Thou provided for the saints in heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?'"[e]

14, 15. (14) **clefts**, *etc.*,[a] with reference to the dove, wh. hides in holes of the rocks. "The hiding-places of the rocky precipices." This continues the lover's entreaty to come out from the secret chambers of the harem. (15) **foxes**, better. *jackals*, shy animals, wh. come forth only at night, and then do great mischief in the vineyards, as they are excessively fond of grapes. **tender grapes**, as *v.* 13.[b] See prev. reference to the bride being busy in the vineyards, ch. i. 6. She hints that these vineyard duties prevent her hastening to join him.

The dove and the rock (*v.* 14).—I. The title given by Christ to the converted soul. Dove—1. Beautiful; 2. Cleanly; 3. Harmless; 4. Loving; 5. Fruitful; 6. Sociable; 7. Defenceless: 8. Swift in flight; 9. Homely; 10. Quick-sighted; 11. Used in sacrifice; 12. Lures wild doves to the dove-cote. II. Place of residence. 1. Clefts of rock, Christ the spiritual Rock; 2. Secret place of the stairs, ordinances, prayer, etc. III. The request. 1. Let me see Thy countenance; 2. Let me hear Thy voice. IV. The motives. Apply—1. To those who are not in the clefts of

a Tame pigeons are fond of building their nests in the secret places underneath the stairs leading to the roofs of houses.

b "This *v.* is the fragment of a vintager's song, which Shulamith sings in answer to the request of her lover."—*Herder, etc.*

v. 14. *G. Campbell*, 136.

v. 15. *Abp. Sandys*, 55.

c W. Stevens.

rock; 2. To those who are; 3. To all.[c]—*The little foxes* (*v.* 15).—I. Some of the little foxes that spoil the vine. The little foxes of—1. Unsanctified tempers; 2. Of the tongue; 3. Of the habits of the life: 4. Of irregularity and neglect; 5. Of pernicious thoughts and judgings; 6. Of selfishness. II. How they spoil the vine. 1. They deprive of spiritual strength; 2. They prevent growth and fruitfulness; 3. They endanger spiritual life. III. What we are to do with them. 1. Vigilance is necessary; 2. They must be entrapped; 3. They must be destroyed. Learn:—Let the subject lead to—(1) Self-examination; (2) Fidelity; (3) Resolution.[d]

Note on v. 14.—The Tamul translation has, instead of "countenance," "form:" "Thy form is comely." Dr. Boothroyd says, "stairs" is certainly improper; but may there not be here an allusion to the ancient custom of building towers in the East, for the purpose of accommodating doves? I have seen one which had stairs inside (probably to enable a person to ascend and watch for the approach of strangers): on the outside were numerous holes, in regular order, where the doves concealed themselves, and brought up their young. It is common to call a female by the name of dove, but it refers more to secrecy than beauty. The mother of Rama said it was necessary for him to go to the desert, but she did not mention the reason to her husband; upon which he said, by way of persuading her to tell him, "Oh! my dove, am I a stranger?"[e] The phrase which we render the secret places of the stairs may, with more propriety, be translated the secret crevices of the precipitous rocks; for the original term signifies a place so high and steep that it cannot be approached but by ladders. So closely pursued were the people of Israel, and so unable to resist the assault of their enemies, that, like the timid dove, they fled to the fastnesses of the mountains, and the holes of the rocks.[f]

16, 17. (16) **feedeth,** *etc.*, recalling the comparison of the roe. (17) **shadows,** of night: the time in wh. timid roes feed. **Bether,**[a] better translate, division, separation, time of parting between beloved and bride. The local reference would be to mountains of Bithron, separated from the rest of Israel by Jordan, and not far from Bethabara.

The mountain of myrrh.—

Up to the fair myrrh-mountain,
The fresh frankincense hill,
I'll get me in this midnight,
And drink of love my fill.
O hills of fragrance, smiling
With every flower of love;
O slopes of sweetness, breathing
Your odours from above,—
Ye send me silent welcome,
I waft you mine again;
Give me the wings of morning,
Burst this still-binding chain.
For soon shall break the day,
And shadows flee away.
Amid time's angry uproar,
Unmoved, unruffled, still
Keep, keep me calmly, truly
Doing the loved one's will.

d Dr. J. Burns.

"Foxes are observed by many authors to be fond of grapes, and to make great havoc in vineyards. Aristophanes (in his *Equites*) compares soldiers to foxes, who spoil whole countries, as the others do vineyards. Galen (in his *Book of Aliments*) tells us that hunters did not scruple to eat the flesh of foxes in autumn, when they were grown fat with feeding on grapes."—*Burder.*

"Alas! the love of woman! it is known to be a lovely and a fearful thing."—*Byron.*

e Roberts.

f Paxton.

a Mr. Williams believes that he has found the ancient Bether in Wady Beitîr, which comes down from the south, and unites with Wady el Werd.

Eusebius says Bether was an impregnable fortress not far from Jerusalem.

v. 16. *W. Pemble,* 583; *Bossuet,* ix. 130; *Bourdaloue,* ii. 347; *D. Wilcox,* ii. 177; *Dr. E. Payson,* i. 552; *H. E. Manning,* iii. 411; *H. Vaughan,* 216.

v. 17. *T. Boston,* v. 525.

"He loved Amye, till he saw Floriat, and when

he saw Cynthia, forgot them both: but fair Phillis was incomparably beyond them all: Clorris surpassed her, and yet when he espied Amaryllis, she was his sole mistress. O divine Amaryllis! how lovely, how tall, how comely she was, till he saw another, and then she was the sole subject of his thoughts. In fine, her he loves best he saw last." —*R. Burton.*

"Love! what a volume in a word! an ocean in a tear! A seventh heaven in a glance! a whirlwind in a sigh! The lightning in a touch—a millennium in a moment! What concentrated joy, or woe, in blessed or blighted love!" —*Tupper.*

"Love one human being purely and warmly, and you will love all. The heart in this heaven, like the wandering sun, sees nothing, from the dew-drop to the ocean, but a mirror which it warms and fills."—*Richter.*

"Love is not love which alters when it altcration finds, or bends with the remover to remove; O no! it is an ever fixed mark, that looks on tempests, and is never shaken; it is the star to every wandering bark whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken." —*Shakespeare.*

Mid din of stormy voices,
The clamour and the war,
Keep me with eye full-gazing
On the eternal star;
Still working, suffering, loving,
Still true and self-denied;
In the old faith abiding,
To the old names allied.
For soon shall break the day,
And shadows flee away.

From earthly power and weakness
Keep me alike apart;
From self-will and unmeekness,
From pride of lip or heart.
Without let tempests gather,
Let all be calm within,
Unfretted and unshaken
By human strife and sin,
And when these limbs are weary,
And throbs this sleepless brain,
With breath from yon myrrh-mountain
Revive my soul again.
For soon shall break the day,
And shadows flee away.

There my Beloved dwelleth,
He calls me up to Him;
He bids me quit these valleys,
These moorlands brown and dim.
There my long-parted wait me,
The missed and mourned below;
Now, eager to rejoin them,
I fain would rise and go.
Not long we here shall linger,
Not long we here shall sigh;
The hour of dew and dawning
Is hastening from on high.
For soon shall break the day,
And shadows flee away.

O streaks of happy dayspring,
Salute us from above;
O never-setting sunlight,
Earth longeth for thy love.
O hymns of unknown gladness,
That hail us from these skies,
Swell till you gently silence
Earth's meaner melodies.
O hope, all hope surpassing,
For evermore to be;
O Christ, the Church's Bridegroom,
In Paradise with Thee!
For soon shall break the day,
And shadows flee away.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—5. (1) by night, in the night-hours. Some take this as the narration of her dreams. (2) rise now, or, Come, let me rise. city, Jerusalem, or perhaps Shunem. (3) watchmen, night-guards, or sentinels. (4) mother's house, *i.e.* the part of the dwelling appropriated to the females. (5) charge, *etc.*, as ch. ii. 7.

Perseverance crowned with success (*vv.* 1—4).—In our remarks on the bride's experience we shall notice—I. Her persevering exertions. 1. This to correct our lukewarmness; 2. To stimulate our desires after Him; 3. To endear His presence to us. II. The successful issue of them. This is—1. Expressly promised by God Himself; 2. Confirmed by natural experience. III. The use she made of her success. And thus we should—1. Exert ourselves to retain the Saviour with us; 2. Seek to enjoy the most intimate communion with Him. Learn—1. To fix our hearts supremely on the Lord; 2. Not to yield to sloth in our pursuit of Him; 3. Nor to despondency.[a]

The strength of love.—Mercers' Hall stands upon a most interesting site. Here was the house of Gilbert Becket, a yeoman, who, whilst following his lord to the Holy Land during the crusades, was taken prisoner by a Saracen emir, and confined in a dungeon. The emir had a daughter, who saw and pitied the captive. Pity in this instance proved akin to love, and under the influence of these feelings she contrived to set him free. Gilbert returned to England, leaving his benefactress behind, pining in sorrow for his loss, which at last grew so insupportable that she determined to seek him through the world. She went to the nearest port, and embarked on the sea, the words "London" and "Gilbert" being all the directions she had to guide her. The first sufficed to guide her to the English capital; but when there, she could only wander from street to street, repeating with touching pathos the other,—"Gilbert! Gilbert!" How the fond and single-hearted girl succeeded in finding Gilbert the story sayeth not; but she did find him, and was rewarded for all her troubles, obtained the fruition of all her hopes. The yeoman welcomed her with tears of joy, had her immediately baptised, and was then united to her in marriage. The son of the fair pagan and the yeoman was the far-famed Thomas à Becket.[b]

6—8. (6) who is this? ref. to the bride's entry into the city of David. This is an expression of admiration. wilderness, or the pasture-lands; the country. pillars of smoke, arising from the frankincense and other perfumes burned in connection with a bridal procession. powders, or spices. (7) bed, or royal palanquin, sent to fetch the bride in. valiant men, to form a body-guard, or guard of honour. (8) upon his thigh, ready for instant use. fear, of robbers attacking the procession.[a]

Christ exalted to glory (*v.* 6).—I. Consider the importance of the ascension of Christ to confirm our faith. II. That the ascension of Christ was a suitable reward for His services. And—III. The special promised benefits by it conferred upon us.[b]

Perfumes.—The use of perfumes at Eastern marriages is common; and upon great occasions very profuse. Not only are the

v. 1. *B. Hinton*, 144.

v. 3. *S. Deyling*, iii. 16.

v. 4. *J. Wilson*, 584; *R. M'Cheyne*, 412.

"Mightier far than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway of magic potent over sun and star, is love, though oft to agony distrest, and though its favourite seat be feeble woman's breast."—*Shakespeare.*

a C. Simeon, M.A.

"A man may be a miser of his wealth; he may tie up his talent in a napkin; he may hug himself in his reputation; but he is always generous in his love. Love cannot stay at home; a man cannot keep it to himself. Like light, it is constantly travelling. A man must spend it, must give it away."—*Dr. Macleod.*

b Old England.

a "The king's affection is expressed not only by the state in which the bride is conducted to the palace, but also by his solicitude for her ease and safety on the journey."—*Spk. Com.*

b H. Verschoyle, M.A.

"Love and hate live and grow together in the heart. When they wax, they wax together; when they wane, they wane together; I mean real love of good and real hate of evil. If you increase in love of good, you will also, and by the same act, increase in the loathing of evil; if you have learnt to loathe sin more, you have also at the same moment learnt to rejoice more heartily in holiness."—*Arnot.*

garments scented till, in the Psalmist's language, they smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; it is also customary for virgins to meet, and lead the procession, with silver gilt pots of perfumes: and sometimes aromatics are burned in the windows of all the houses in the streets through which the procession is to pass, till the air becomes loaded with fragrant odours. In allusion to this practice it is demanded, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?" So liberally were these rich perfumes burned on this occasion, that a pillar of smoke ascended from the censers, so high, that it could be seen at a considerable distance: and the perfume was so rich, as to equal in value and fragrance all the powders of the merchant. The custom of burning perfumes on these occasions still continues in the East; for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, describing the reception of a young Turkish bride at the bagnio, says, "Two virgins met her at the door; two others filled silver gilt pots with perfumes, and began the procession, the rest following in pairs, to the number of thirty. In this order they marched round the three rooms of the bagnio." And Maillet informs us that when the ambassadors of an Eastern monarch, sent to propose marriage to an Egyptian queen, made their entrance into the capital of that kingdom, the streets through which they passed were strewed with flowers, and precious odours, burning in the windows from very early in the morning, embalmed the air.[c]

c Paxton.

a O. Zöckler.

9—11. (9) **chariot**, the palanquin of *v.* 7 further described. **wood of Lebanon**, very costly, and sweet-smelling. (10) **pillars**, to support the canopy. **covering**, or canopy, or perhaps seat of cushions. **paved**, *etc.*, reference is probably to mosaic work or tapestry, given, as a sign of goodwill, to the bride by the court ladies. (11) **go forth**, to meet the procession: as in the parable of the Ten Virgins. **mother**, *i.e.* Bathsheba. The crown referred to is the festive coronet of gold and silver wh. bridegrooms wore at Israelitish weddings.[a]

The couch or palanquin.—The original word, *aperion*, does not occur anywhere else, and is not, therefore, the usual word for a chariot. The description appears to suggest the idea of a portable couch, litter, or palanquin. Such conveyances were in use among the ancient Egyptians, with whose refinement Solomon appears to have been well acquainted. Mr. Wilkinson saw, at Beni-Hassan, a representation, which is copied in his late work, of a person of distinction carried in an open palanquin by four bearers, closely followed by an attendant with a sort of parasol. Such vehicles are still employed by persons of consideration in different Eastern countries, and are very various in their character and mode of use: but in general terms they may be described as couches, covered with a canopy supported by pillars at the four corners, and hung round with curtains to protect the person from the sun: and carried on men's shoulders by means of two poles, on which they are supported. They are usually long enough for the rider to recline at full length in them, and about three feet broad: but the size, height, and richness depend, of course, on the rank or wealth of the owner. The number of bearers is proportioned to the weight, and in travelling there are two or more sets, which relieve each other by turns. When, however, litters of this description are employed in Western Asia, they are

v. 11. *Dr. J. Donne*, v. 1; *J. Fluvel*, vi. 545.

"They should beware who charges lay in love, on solid ground they make them, for there are hearts so proudly fond, that wring them hard they'll break, or ever they will stoop to right themselves."—*J. S. Knowles.*

"An old, a grave discreet man, is fittest to discourse of love matters; because he hath likely more experience, observed more, hath a more staid judgment, can better discern, resolve, discuss, advise, give better cautions and more solid precepts, better inform his auditors in such a sub-

seldom carried by men, but by two animals (usually camels or mules), one of which goes before and the other behind between the poles. There is another kind of canopied litter, mounted on the back of a single animal (an elephant, in India), on which great persons ride in state, and which, from its elevation and richness, is conspicuous from afar; but in the present instance something of the other sort is probably intended. Vehicles of this description, particularly royal ones, are sometimes of astonishing magnificence, the woodwork being covered with silver, and enriched with precious stones, while the canopy is of the most costly stuffs, brocades, and satins, also adorned with jewels, and the interior fitting-up of corresponding splendour.[b]—Such a ceremony as this was customary among the Jews at their marriages. Maillet informs us the crowns were made of different materials. Describing the custom, as practised by the members of the Greek Church who now live in Egypt, he says, "that the parties to be married are placed opposite to a reading-desk, upon which the book of the Gospels is placed, and upon the book two crowns, which are made of such material as people choose, of flowers, of cloth, or of tinsel. There he (the priest) continues his benedictions and prayers, into which he introduces all the patriarchs of the Old Testament. He after that places these crowns, the one on the head of the bridegroom, the other on that of the bride, and covers them both with a veil." After some other ceremonies, the priest concludes the whole by taking off their crowns, and dismissing them with prayers.[c]

ject, and by reason of his riper years, sooner divert."—*Burton.*

"Love's feeling is more soft and sensible than are the tender horns of cockled snails; love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste."—*Shakespeare.*

"'Tis love combined with guilt alone, that melts the soften'd soul to cowardice and sloth; but virtuous passions prompt the great resolve, and fan the slumbering spark of heavenly fire."—*Johnson.*

b Dr. Kitto.

c Burder.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **doves' eyes**, ch. i. 15. **within thy locks**, or behind thy veil. **hair . . goats**, *i.e.* "her locks were jet, glossy black, like the Syrian goats."[a] **appear**, *marg.* eat of. (2) **teeth . . sheep**, "one of the pleasantest sights to be witnessed under the clear and brilliant sky of Western Asia is a flock of snow-white sheep, scattered over the surface of a fine green meadow."[b] **bear twins**, better, "are equal pairs and none is lost," referring to the regularity and completeness of the teeth. (3) **scarlet**, contrasting beautifully with the white of the teeth. **speech**, better, mouth, the organ of speech. **temples**, likened to a sliced pomegranate blushing with its fruitful seeds. "The fruit is of a flesh colour, with tints of a deeper rose."

The Syrian goat.—The goats of Palestine are of two kinds,—the one differing little from those of our own country; the other somewhat larger than ours, and remarkable for the length of its ears. The missionary Schulz, writing from Lebanon, describes these animals:—"We pitched our tent near a brook, and witnessed the manner in which the goats are led down from the mountains, in order to drink at the brook. There were two herds, of a light reddish colour, with long hair and hanging ears. These goats are called in Arabic *kemmel;* they are shorn like sheep, and their hair is sold under the name of camel's hair. The yarn which is purchased in Europe for camel's hair is mixed and adulterated with wool. Goats such as I have described are most numerous in Gilead and Angora in Lesser Asia. The hair of these animals was probably that employed in making curtains

a Thomson.

b Van Lennep.

"A beautiful eye makes silence eloquent; a kind eye makes contradiction an assent; an enraged eye makes beauty deformed. This little member gives life to every other part about us; and I believe the story of Argus implies no more than that the eye is in every part; that is to say, every other part would be mutilated, were not its force represented more by the eye than even by itself."—*Addison.*

"I dare not look upon her eyes, where wronged love sits like the basilisk."—*Nathaniel Field.*

for the tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 4). As they descended from the mountains, I was reminded of the expression in the Song of Solomon (iv. 1), 'Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.' Goats' milk was formerly, as it is now, a favourite article of food in the East: hence in Pr. xxvii. 27 it is promised as one of the rewards of industry, 'Thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.'"

a "Some quiet spot, it may be in the garden of the palace, which is the scene of the present meeting."—*Delitzsch.*

4—7. (4) **tower**, *etc.*, see Ne. iii. 25—27; Mi. iv. 8. **hang**, *etc.*, with allusion to the bride's necklaces and ornaments. (5) **young roes**, beautiful and delicate, and exactly matching. (6) **break**, *etc.*, breathe; this seems to express the desire of the bride to get away from the public excitement to the retirements of the palace, wh. are poetically called the "mountain of myrrh," etc.[a] (7) **all fair**, summing up the praises.

v. 6. *W. Romaine*, iii. 93.

The Hûleh lily.—This flower is very large, and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory. And when I met this incomparable flower in all its loveliness, among the oak-woods around the northern base of Tabor and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent His youth, I felt assured that it was to this He referred. We call it Hûleh lily because it was here that it was first discovered. Its botanical name, if it has one, I am unacquainted with, and am not anxious to have any other than that which connects it with its neighbourhood. I suppose, also, that it is this identical flower to which Solomon refers in the Song of Songs, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." The bride, comparing her beloved to a roe or a young hart, sees him feeding among the lilies. Our flower delights most in the valleys, but is also found on the mountains. It grows among thorns, and I have sadly lacerated my hands in extricating it from them. Nothing can be in higher contrast than the luxuriant, velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it. Gazelles still delight to feed among them, and you can scarcely ride through the woods north of Tabor, where these lilies abound, without frightening them from their pasture.[b]

v. 7. *Dr. T. Crisp*, ii. 410; *Bossuet*, ii. 113.

"Love is like the spirit in Ezekiel's wheels, that made them move so swiftly; so that dulness, sluggishness, and wearisomeness is quickly dispelled by heavenly love, as the ice is presently dissolved by the sunbeams."—*Anthony Burgess.*

b *Dr. Thomson.*

8, 9. (8) **Lebanon**, the district fr. whence the bride was brought. **Amana**, or Abane, the part of the Antilibanus that looks over Damascus. **Shenir**, another peak of the same range. **Hermon**, the culminating point of the Antilibanus. **lions' dens**, or panthers', wh. have been seen in Southern Lebanon in recent years.[a] There is, however, no difficulty in assuming that lions were found in those wooded regions. (9) **ravished**, taken away. **one . . eyes**, or "one look of thine."[b]

a "These references describe the wild inhospitable character of the district rom which the bride comes."—*O. Zöckler.*

One of thine eyes.—There is a singularity in this imagery, which has much perplexed the critics: and perhaps it is not possible to ascertain the meaning of the poet beyond a doubt. Supposing the royal bridegroom to have had a profile, or side view of his bride, in the present instance, only one eye, or one side of her necklace, would be observable; yet this charms and overpowers him. Tertullian mentions a custom in the East, of women unveiling only one eye in conversation, while they keep the other covered: and Niebuhr mentions a like custom in some

b *Gesenius.*

v. 8. *T. Boston*, iii. 118.

"Solid love, whose root is virtue, can no more die than virtue itself."—*Erasmus.*

parts of Arabia. This brings us to nearly the same interpretation as the above.[c]

10, 11. (10) **love**, or loves, endearments, caresses. (11) **drop**, honey, as the honeycomb does. **under thy tongue**, so as to sweeten thy words. **smell**, *etc.*, comp. Ge. xxvii. 27.[a]

The heavenly Bridegroom.—Thrice happy souls that have Christ for their Commander, and are led, governed, and conducted by Him as their King and Captain of their salvation. His very "banner" over them is love; all His commands are commands of love; all the service He requireth of them is imposed in love; He never enjoineth them anything but what is for their good. They are never losers by obeying His pleasure; all their losses come by their disobedience: He never putteth them upon any suffering, but it is done in love. He chooseth the sweet attribute of love, showing that it is a special act of His love that He leadeth on His followers to conflict, intending to make them happy gainers, "more than conquerors." [b]

12—15. (12) **enclosed**, marg. *barred* (ch. viii. 9). **fountain sealed**, so set apart for the particular service of the king.[a] (13) **pomegranates**,[b] regarded as a sacred fruit, "emblem of spiritual fruitfulness in good works. **camphire**, or cypress, henna[c] (ch. i. 14). (14) **spikenard**, *etc.*, different kinds of spices that were highly esteemed. Some of them were foreign plants. The description is not of an actual, but an ideal, garden. **saffron**, or crocus. **calamus**, a sweet cane, brought from Arabia Felix. **cinnamon**, if the well-known article of commerce it came fr. Ceylon. (15) **living waters**, *i.e.* flowing waters, running streams.

The sealed fountain.—This morning we went to see some remarkable places in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. The first place that we directed our course to was those famous fountains, pools, and gardens, about an hour and a quarter distant from Bethlehem, southward, said to have been the contrivance and delight of King Solomon. To these works and places of pleasure that great prince is supposed to allude, Ec. ii. 5, 6, where, among the other instances of his magnificence, he reckons up his gardens, and vineyards, and pools. As for the pools, they are three in number, lying in a row above each other, being so disposed that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third. Their figure is quadrangular; the breadth is the same in all, amounting to about ninety paces; in their length there is some difference between them, the first being about one hundred and sixty paces long, the second two hundred, and the third two hundred and twenty. They are all lined with wall, and plastered, and contain a great depth of water. Close by the pools is a pleasant castle of a modern structure; and at about the distance of one hundred and forty paces from them is a fountain, from which, principally, they derive their waters. This the friars will have to be that "sealed fountain" to which the holy spouse is compared, Cant. iv. 12, and, in confirmation of this opinion, they pretend a tradition, that King Solomon shut up these springs, and kept the door of them sealed with his signet, to the end that he might preserve the waters for his own drinking, in their natural freshness and purity. Nor was it difficult thus to secure them, they

c *Williams.*

a Comp. Ps. xlv. 9. Proverbs.—"Nobody's sweetheart is ugly."—*Dutch.* "People in love think other people's eyes are out."—*Spanish.* "Love is blind."—*English.*—"Faults are thick where love is thin."—*Welsh.* "To love and to be wise is impossible."—*Spanish.* "True love never grows heavy." "Who would be loved must love."—*Italian.*
b *J. Maynard* (1646).

a "The garden and the spring being locked up and sealed, naturally indicates that the access is open only to the owner and possessor himself."—*O. Zöckler.*

Comp. Ge. xxix. 3; Da. vi. 17.

b "One species of pomegranate has kernels of a deep crimson colour, preferred by some on account of their strong acidity, their juice being sometimes used instead of vinegar. The other variety is nearly white, of a pleasant sweet flavour, very refreshing, and a great favourite with all classes. These trees are often seen in gardens by running water, but they are also grown in extensive orchards, where they can be irrigated, as at Narlikessy, near Smyrna."—*Van Lennep.*

c The *henna* is a shrub rising five

or six feet high, with fragrant whitish flowers growing in clusters (*Lawsonia alba*).

v. 12. *R. M. M'Cheyne*, 337.

v. 15. *Dr. A. Monro*, 191; *Bp. Vidal*, 342.

"Love that has nothing but beauty to keep it in good health, is short-lived, and apt to have agues-fits."—*Erasmus.*

"They say, base men being in love, have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them." — *Shakespeare.*

d Maundrell.

e Burder.

a "The beauties and attractions of both north and south of Lebanon, with its streams of sparkling water and fresh mountain air, of Engedi with its tropical climate and henna plantations, of the spice-groves of Arabia Felix, and of the rarest products of the distant mysterious Ophir, must all combine to furnish out one glorious representation."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 16. *Young* (of Hawick), 2; *Dr. R. Hawker*, ii. 483; *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 225; *E. Blencowe*, iii. 325.

"Love is poesie—it doth create; from fading features, dim soul, doubtful heart, and this world's

rising under ground, and having no avenue to them but by a little hole, like to the mouth of a narrow well. Through this hole you descend directly down, but not without some difficulty, for about four yards, and then arrive in a vaulted room, fifteen paces long, and eight broad. Joining to this is another room, of the same fashion, but somewhat less. Both these rooms are covered with handsome stone arches, very ancient, and perhaps the work of Solomon himself. Below the pools here runs down a narrow rocky valley, enclosed on both sides with high mountains. This the friars will have to be the "enclosed garden" alluded to in the same place of the Canticles before cited. What truth there may be in this conjecture, I cannot absolutely pronounce. As to the pools, it is probable enough they may be the same with Solomon's; there not being the like store of excellent spring-water to be met with anywhere else throughout all Palestine.[d] —Féirouz, a vizier, having divorced his wife Chemsennissa, on suspicion of criminal conversation with the sultan, the brothers of Chemsennissa applying for redress to their judge, "My lord," said they, "we have rented to Féirouz a most delightful garden, a terrestrial paradise; he took possession of it, encompassed with high walls, and planted with the most beautiful trees, that bloomed with flowers and fruit. He has broken down the walls, plucked the tender flowers, devoured the finest fruit, and would now restore to us this garden, robbed of everything that contributed to render it delicious, when we gave him admission to it." Féirouz, in his defence, and the sultan in his attention to Chemsennissa's innocence, still carry on the same allegory of the garden, as may be seen in the author.[e]

16. **north .. south**, not the east or west winds, bec. the one brought the biting cold, and the other the severe rains. Two opposite winds are mentioned bec. the fragrance is to be wafted in all directions. **his garden**,[a] hers, but she willingly acknowledges it as *his*.

The south wind.—The suffocating heats wafted on the wings of the south wind from the glowing sands of the desert are felt more or less in all the Oriental regions, and even in Italy itself, although far distant from the terrible wastes of the neighbouring continents, where they produce a general languor and difficulty of respiration. A wind so fatal or injurious to the people of the East must be to them an object of alarm or dismay. Yet, in the Song of Solomon, its pestilential blast is invited by the spouse to come and blow upon her garden, and waft its fragrance to her beloved. If the south winds in Judæa are as oppressive as they are in Barbary and Egypt, and as the winds from the desert are at Aleppo (which, according to Russel, are of the same nature as the south winds in Canaan), or if they are only very hot, as Le Bruin certainly found them in October, would the spouse have desired the north wind to depart, as Bochart renders it, and the south wind to blow? The supposition cannot be admitted. An inspired writer never departs from the strictest truth and propriety in the use of figures, according to the rules of Oriental composition; and therefore a meaning directly opposite must be the true one, to correspond with the physical character of that wind. The nature of the prayer also requires a different version; for is it to be supposed that the spouse, in the same breath, would desire two directly opposite winds to blow upon her garden? It

now remains to inquire if the original text will admit of another version, and it must be evident that the only difficulty lies in the term which we render "Come thou." Now the verb *bo* signifies both to come and to depart; literally, to remove from one place to another. In this sense of going or departing it is used in the prophecies of Jonah twice in one verse: "He found a ship (*baa*) going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it (*labo*) to go with them." It occurs again in this sense in the Book of Ruth, and is so rendered in our translation: "He went (*rayabo*) to lie down at the end of the heap of corn." The going down or departure of the sun is expressed by a derivative of the same verb in the Book of Deuteronomy: "Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down?" Joshua uses it in the same sense: "Unto the great sea (Mebo), towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." The passage, then, under consideration, may be rendered in this manner, putting the address to the south wind in a parenthesis: "Arise, O north wind (retire, thou south), blow upon my garden, let the spices thereof flow forth, that my beloved may come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." This conclusion, were any confirmation necessary to establish so plain a truth, is verified by the testimony of Le Bruin, already quoted, who, in the course of his travels in Palestine, found from experience that it produced an oppressive heat, not the gentle and inviting warmth which Sanctius supposed. No traveller, so far as the writer has been able to discover, gives a favourable account of the south wind; consequently, it cannot be an object of desire: the view, therefore, which Harmer first gave of this text is, in every respect, entitled to the preference: "Awake, O north wind (depart, thou south), blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."[b]

wretched happiness, a life which is as near to heaven as are the stars."—*Bailey.*

"When hearts are join'd in virtuous union, love's impartial beams gild the low cottage of the faithful swain with equal warmth, as when he darts his fires on canopies of state."—*Fenton.*

"I love thee more than the sunburnt earth loves softening showers — more than new ransomed captives love the day, or dying martyrs, breathing forth their souls, the acclamations of whole hosts of angels." — *Cumberland.*

"A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband."—*Goldsmith.*

b Paxton.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1. sister . . spouse, better, *sister-bride.* **have gathered,** *etc.*, these figures of speech may be referred to the "graces of the Church;" "Christ describes Himself as nourished and refreshed by them, and invites others, even the holy angels themselves, to taste them with delight."[a] The king indicates that he is every way pleased and satisfied with his bride. **eat . . abundantly,** an invitation addressed to the guests at the marriage.

Open-air customs in the East.—The inhabitants of the great towns of Syria, during the pleasant weather in winter, frequently leave their homes and give entertainments to their friends under tents pitched in the country for that purpose. In April and part of May they retire to the gardens, and in the heat of summer receive their guests in the summer-houses, or under the shade of the trees. The same custom seems, from the invitation of the bridegroom, to have prevailed in the land of Canaan in the time of Solomon. The inhabitants of Aleppo make their excursion very early in the season; and the cold weather is not supposed by Solomon to have ceased long before, since it is distinctly mentioned. In Syria, the narcissus flowers during the whole of the Murbania; hyacinths and violets, at latest, before

a Wordsworth.

v. 1. *Bossuet,* xiii. 182.

"The first sound in the song of love scarce more than silence is, and yet a sound. Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings of that mysterious instrument, the soul, and play the prelude of our fate."—*Longfellow.*

"Draw my soul to Thyself by the secret power of Thy love, as the sunshine in the spring draws forth the creatures from their

winter cells; meet it half-way, and entice it to Thee, as the loadstone doth the iron, and as the greater flame attracts the less." —*Baxter.*

He who has love in his heart has spurs in his sides.

b Paxton.

it is quite over. Therefore, when Solomon says the flowers appear on the earth, he does not mean the time when the earliest flowers disclose their bloom, but when the verdant turf is thickly studded with all the rich, the gay, and the diversified profusion of an Oriental spring. This delightful season is ushered in at Aleppo about the middle of February by the appearance of a small crane's-bill on the bank of the river which meanders through its extensive gardens; and a few days after, so rapid is the progress of vegetation, all the beauty of spring is displayed: about the same time, the birds renew their songs. When Thevenot visited Jordan on the sixteenth of April, he found the little woods on the margin of the river filled with nightingales in full chorus. This is rather earlier than at Aleppo, where they do not appear till nearly the end of the month. These facts illustrate the strict propriety of Solomon's description, every circumstance of which is accurately copied from nature.[b]

2—4. (2) **sleep . . waketh,** fig. of dreaming in sleep. **knocketh,** as at the door of the house.[a] **undefiled,** or perfect one. **filled with dew,** through waiting so long in the night air. (3) **put off,** *etc.*, these are the excuses of drowsiness, or the parleying so customary in the E. **coat,** tunic, or undergarment. **feet,** which were bare during the day, so needed washing at night. (4) **hole . . door,** a hole was necessary bec. the bolts of the lock were lifted on the inside.

Eastern locks.—In the capital of Egypt, also, all their locks and keys are of wood; they have none of iron, not even for their city gates, which may with ease be opened without a key. The keys, or bits of timber with little pieces of wire, lift up other pieces of wire that are in the lock, and enter into certain little holes out of which the ends of the wires that are in the key have just expelled the corresponding wires, upon which the gate is opened. But to accomplish this a key is not necessary; the Egyptian lock is so imperfectly made that one may without difficulty open it with his finger, armed with a little soft paste. The locks in Canaan at one time do not seem to have been made with greater art, if Solomon allude to the ease with which they were frequently opened without a key:—"My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him."[b]

a "The sleep of Orientals is proverbially heavy, and loud and repeated knockings at doors are sometimes heard at the dead of night, accompanied by the reiterated shouts of some belated traveller, re-echoed by the narrow streets, and arousing all the barking curs of the neighbourhood; then a parley ensues, the gate opens to admit the stranger, and the street is again hushed and silent."—*Van Lennep.*

b Paxton.

5, 6. (5) **dropped with myrrh,**[a] either coming from the dew-laden hands of her beloved, or from her profusely anointing herself before retiring to rest. (6) **withdrawn himself,** bec. grieved with her drowsy indifference. **my soul failed,** better, I was not in my senses when he spake first. She grieves over the careless answer of *v.* 3.

Hands dropping myrrh.—When the spouse rose from her bed to open to her beloved, her hand dropped myrrh (balsam), and her fingers sweet-smelling myrrh, on the handles of the lock. In this remark she seems to allude rather to a liquid than a powder; for the word rendered dropped, signifies to distil as the heavens or the clouds do rain, or as the mountains are said to distil new wine from the vines planted there, or as the inverted cups of lilies shed their roscid or honey drops. The same term is figuratively applied to words or discourse, which are said to distil as the dew, and drop as the rain; but still the allusion is to some

a "**Pure,** or perhaps liquid myrrh, that wh. weeps or drops from the tree, the most esteemed but most expensive of this class of perfumes."—*Good.*

vv. 2—8. *Dr. E. B. Pusey,* 381.

"Oh! there is nothing holier in this life of ours than the first consciousness of love—the first fluttering of its

liquid. As a noun, it is the name of stacte, or myrrh, distilling from the tree of its own accord, without incision. Again, the word rendered sweet-smelling signifies passing off, distilling, or trickling down; and therefore, in its present connection, more naturally refers to a fluid than to a dry powder. If these observations be just, it will not be difficult to ascertain the real sense of the passage. When the spouse rose from her bed to open the door of her apartment, she hastily prepared to receive her beloved, by washing herself with myrrh and water, or, according to an established custom in the East, by anointing her head with liquid essence of balsam, a part of which, in either case, might remain on her hands and fingers, and from them trickle down on the handles of the lock.[b]

7, 8. (7) **watchmen,** night police. **smote me,** bec. properly a woman had no business in the streets at night. The watchmen took her for a person of bad character. (8) **sick of love,** and so fully penitent for seeming to neglect him.

The Biblia Pauperum.—Before the invention of printing no books existed except such as were written. These were so scarce and high-priced that hardly any person except the rich could afford to purchase them; consequently, the greater part of the people of every country remained in the deepest ignorance. This, at length, began to pass away; and among the earliest attempts to impart religious instruction was the *Biblia Pauperum*, or, "The Poor Man's Bible," supposed to have been printed about the year 1420. It consists of forty pictures engraved on wood (printing by type was not then invented); each picture is divided into three parts, containing subjects taken from the Bible, very rudely drawn and imperfectly executed, with a text or a few words explaining the subject of the picture. Those who were unable to possess larger works might thus obtain, at a small expense, a degree of knowledge of some of the events recorded in the Scriptures. A few copies are still to be found, and some idea of the work may be acquired from a description of the fortieth or last picture. In the middle division is represented the Redeemer bestowing the crown of life on one of those who had departed in His fear and love. On the left is the daughter of Zion, crowned by the spouse, as described in the Song of Solomon; and on the right is represented the angel speaking to St. John. At the upper part of the picture are busts of David and Isaiah, and two texts of Scripture—one is Sol. Song v. 7, 8; the other Rev. xxi., the latter part of the 9th verse. There are also some other short inscriptions. A fuller account of this work may be seen in the Rev. T. H. Horne's publication on the Holy Scriptures. The copies of this "Poor Man's Bible" which remain are generally incomplete, and have been much used. Imperfect as this method of teaching the truths contained in the Bible must have been, yet, from several circumstances, it appears to have been received with eagerness, and may remind us that when our Lord was upon earth "the common people heard Him gladly."

9. **what . . beloved,** the earnestness of the bride needed to be accounted for. This question provides the occasion for her dilating on the excellencies of the bridegroom. "Christian interpreters apply the description directly to the Incarnate Son,

silken wings—the first rising sound and breath of that wind which is so soon to sweep through the soul, to purify or to destroy!" —*Longfellow.*

b Paxton.

"They plucked off her veil, in order to discover who she was. It is well known that the eunuchs, in the Eastern countries, are at present authorised to treat the females under their charge in this manner."—*Burder.*

"'We are never engaged to love till the Lord's kindness draw us' (Hos. xi. 4)." —*Halyburton.*

"Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of His mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought—the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight for heaven."—*Longfellow.*

"Why did she love him? Curious fool! be still; is human love the growth of human will?"—*Byron.*

a Spk. Com.

"To me there is but one place in the world, and

that where thou art; for where'er I be, thy love doth seek its way into my heart, as will a bird into her secret nest; then sit and sing; sweet wing of beauty, sing."—*Bailey.*
b G. Brooks.

a "Conspicuous as a standard amidst a host of other men."—*O. Zöckler.*

b "Doves delight in clear water brooks, and often bathe in them, and then their liquid loving eyes, 'fitly set' within a border of softest skyey blue, do look as though just washed in transparent milk."—*Thomson.*

"These doves start up from every spring and water-course."—*Van Lennep.*

v. 10. *G. Moore*, 198; *G. Patrick*, 81; *W. Fenn*, 344.

"A pair of bright eyes with a dozen glances suffice to subdue a man; to enslave him, and inflame; to make him even forget; they dazzle him so, that the past becomes straightway dim to him; and he so prizes them, that he would give all his life to possess them. What is the fond love of dearest friends compared to his treasure? Is memory as strong as expectancy, fruition as hunger, gratitude as desire?"—*Thackeray.*

partly in His eternal Godhead, but chiefly in His risen and glorified humanity."[a]

The Divine Bridegroom (*v.* 9).—I. The transcendent excellencies of the Redeemer. 1. As they are in themselves; 2. As they are compared with those of others. II. The regard we owe Him. 1. We should prefer Him to every person and to every object that can become His rival; 2. We should beware of provoking Him to withdraw from us His gracious presence; 3. If on any occasion we have lost a sense of His presence, we should employ diligently the appointed means of regaining it; 4. If He condescends to return, we should find our chief happiness in His communion, and surrender ourselves completely to His will.[b]

10—13. (10) white, "the complexion most admired in youth." Lit. *dazzling white.* ruddy, with reference to his rosy, tinted cheeks. the chiefest, or a standard-bearer.[a] (11) head, *etc.*, *i.e.* "it is noble and precious as the finest gold." bushy, curled; *lit.* hill upon hill. black, sign of youth and strength. (12) eyes, *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 15. An extravagant poetical figure.[b] fitly set, or, sitting on fulness, perhaps with an allusion to the *convex* form of the eye. (13) sweet flowers, marg., *towers of perfume;* prob. plants trained on trellis-work.

Note on v. 10.—In our translation, the Church represents her Saviour as the standard-bearer in the armies of the living God. "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand;" or, according to the margin, a standard-bearer among ten thousand. These phrases are made synonymous, on the groundless supposition that a standard-bearer is the chief of the company; for among the modern Orientals, a standard-bearer is not the chief, more than among the nations of Europe. He is, on the contrary, the lowest commissioned officer in the corps who bears the colours. This, however, seems to be merely a mistake of our translators, in rendering the phrase *dagul meribabah.* If we understand by the word *dagul*, such a flag as is carried at the head of our troops, then, as the Hebrew participle is the pahul, which has a passive, and not an active sense, it must signify one before whom a standard is borne; not the person who lifts up and displays it, but him in whose honour the standard is displayed. It was not a mark of superior dignity in the East to display the standard, but it was a mark of dignity and honour to have the standard carried before one; and the same idea seems to be entertained in other parts of the world. The passage, then, is rightly translated thus: My beloved is white and ruddy, and honourable, as one before whom, or around whom, ten thousand standards are borne. The compliment is returned by her Lord in these words: "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners;" and again, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?" Mr. Harmer imagines that these texts refer to a marriage procession, surrounded with flambeaux. But what is terrible in a company of women, even although "dressed in rich attire, surrounded with nuptial flambeaux," blazing ever so fiercely? Besides, his view sinks the last member of the comparison, and, indeed, seems to throw over it an air of ridicule: Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon clear as the sun, and dazzling, like a bride lighted

home with flambeaux? The common translation certainly sustains much better the dignity of the last clause, while it gives the genuine meaning of *aim*, which, in every passage of Scripture where it occurs, signifies either terrible, or the tumult and confusion of mind which terror produces.[c]

Note on v. 12.—Hebrew, for fitly set, "sitting in fulness;" that is, "fitly placed, and set as a precious stone in the foil of a ring." "See that youth, what a beautiful eye he has! it is like a sapphire set in silver;" which means, the metal represents the white and the blue, the other part the eye. The eyes of their more sacred idols are made of precious stones. "Washed with milk." Though people thus wash themselves after a funeral, the custom is also spoken of, by way of figure, as a matter of great joy. "Oh! yes, they are a happy pair; they wash themselves with milk." "The joy is as great as being bathed in milk." But some do thus actually wash their bodies three or four times a month, and the effect is said to be cooling and pleasing. I suppose, however, it arises as much from an idea of luxury as any other cause. The residence of the god Vishnoo is said to be surrounded by a sea of milk, which may also be another reason to induce the devotee thus to bathe himself.[d]

14—16. (14) **rings**, some think should be *cylinders*, or *rods*.[a] **beryl**, Heb. *Tarshish*; prob. the chrysolite, or topaz.[b] (15) **pillars**, fig. of strength and steadfastness. **sockets of gold**, fig. for the sandals. **as Lebanon**, either taking fig. fr. the majestic mountain form, or from the white limestone rocks. **excellent**, *etc.*, the cedar being regarded as a peculiarly handsome tree. (16) **mouth**, Heb. *palate*, regarded as the organ of speech. **altogether**, *i.e.* all of him is precious.[c]

The believer's boast (*v.* 16).—This is my Friend. I. Let me tell you how I made His acquaintance. II. Let me tell you how He treats me. 1. He never speaks of my past ingratitude; 2. He never fails to supply my wants; 3. He never shuns to rebuke me for my follies; 4. He never seems to grow weary of me; 5. He never treats me as a mere dependent; He calls me His friend. III. Let me tell, further, what I think of Him. 1. He is as condescending as He is rich; 2. His love is as ardent as it is constant; 3. He is as jealous of my affection as He is deserving of it; 4. He is as lavish of His promises as He is faithful in their performance. IV. Let me ask, Do you know Him? He is gracious—1. To be the friend of such a miserable being as I; 2. To let it be known to all the world; 3. To tell me freely to invite all my friends to His house and home, to be His friends as I am.[d]

Note on v. 15.—"His thighs are as pillars of marble, fixed upon pedestals of fine gold;" alluding to his sandals bound on his feet with golden ribands; or, perhaps, expressive of the feet themselves, as being of a redder tincture than the legs and thighs. The Asiatics used to dye their feet of a deep red colour. Thus the lover in *Gitagorinda* says, "O damsel, shall I dye red, with the juice of alactaca, those beautiful feet, which will make the full-blown land lotos blush with shame?"[e]

c Paxton.

"That fine part of our constitution, the eye, seems as much the receptacle and seat of our passions, appetites, and inclinations, as the mind itself; and at least it is the outward portal to introduce them to the house within, or rather the common thoroughfare to let our affections pass in and out. Love, anger, pride, and avarice, all visibly move in those little orbs."—*Addison.*

d Roberts.

a "Rings are worn on all the fingers—even on the thumbs—and are often set with precious stones."—*Van Lennep.*

b "The hands bent in are compared to beautiful rings, in which beryl is set, as the nails are in the fingers."—*Fausset.*

c "Why should I thus endeavour to express His beauty piecemeal, when He is in Himself and altogether the One longed for, drawing all to love, compelling all to love, and inspiring with a longing (for His company) not only those who see, but those who hear?"—*Theodoret.*

v. 16. *T. Watson*, 435; *Dr. S. Hopkins*, 47; *J. Flavel*, ii. 214; *J. Stock*, 73; *E. Cooper*, i. 230; *J. Johnstone*, 43; *C. Neat*, 173.

d Stems and Twigs.

e Sir W. Jones.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **whither**, *etc.*, another question put by the companions, wh. gives occasion for a response indicating the bride's confidence and affection.[a] (2) **beds of spices**, or balm.[b] By this the bride intimates that Sol. is otherwise engaged just at the time, but she is sure that he still cares for her. (3) **I . . beloved's**, *i.e.* I really care for him, and love the bond that binds me to him. At this appeal the bridegroom at once reappears.

The lily in the East.—"Our camels were scattered on the numerous slopes in search of food. On these heights the lilies abounded, with grass and low shrubs between. I noticed that the camels did not touch the lilies at all, but cropped what lay between. It reminded me of the words, 'He feedeth among the lilies,'—among, but not on the lilies; for while the lily furnishes no acceptable food for flocks and herds, it seems, by the shade of its high broad leaves, to retain the moisture, and so to nourish herbage, wherever it grows. The place of lilies would thus be the place of the richest pasture, as Solomon evidently indicates when, again using the figure, he speaks of the 'young roes which feed among the lilies' (Cant. iv. 5, and again vi. 3)."

4—6. (4) **thou**, *etc.*, "Renewed declaration of love after estrangement." **Tirzah**, an old Canaanitish royal city.[a] In the tribe of Ephraim; a remarkably beautiful and charming town in northern Palestine. The exact site is not now known. **Jerusalem**, Ps. xlviii. 2. **terrible**, *etc.*, or awe-inspiring. Alluding to the power of her eyes.[b] Subduing and captivating with her glances.[c] (5) **overcome me**, or taken me by storm. **hair**, *etc.*, ch. iv. 1. (6) **teeth**, *etc.*, ch. iv. 2.

Note on v. 4.—This and the next chapter give an idea of what were the notions of beauty in the bride; she was like the city of Tirzah, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim. A handsome Hindoo female is compared to the sacred city of Seedambaram. The following, also, are signs of beauty in an Eastern woman: her skin is the colour of gold; her hands, nails, and soles of the feet, are of a reddish hue; her limbs must be smooth, and her gait like the stately swan. Her feet are small, like the beautiful lotus; her waist is slender as the lightning: her arms are short, and her fingers resemble the five petals of the kantha flower: her breasts are like the young cocoa-nut, and her neck is as the trunk of the areca tree. Her mouth is like the ambal flower, and her lips as coral; her teeth are like beautiful pearls; her nose is high, and lifted up, like that of the chameleon (when raised to snuff the wind); her eyes are like the sting of the wasp, and the karungu-vally flower; her brows are like the bow, and nicely separated; and her hair is as the black cloud.[d]

7—9. (7) **piece . . locks**, ch. iv. 3. (8) **queens**, *etc.*, Sol. had a large harem,[a] but he intimates here his preference of this bride to all others. (9) **but one**,[b] the one to whom he speaks. "These words represent the *oneness* of the Church Universal."[c]

The dove.—The conjugal chastity of the dove has been cele-

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a "The daughters of Jerus. perceive from the brightness of her countenance that she has received intelligence and illumination from Him. He who before seemed to be at a distance from her house, is now seen to be close by in His garden."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Christ now not only feeds His flock among lilies, but also gathers lilies; gathers with joy and acceptance from His people those fruits of holiness which through the grace of His Spirit they are continually bringing forth."—*Thrupp.*

a Jos. xii. 24. The name *Tirzah* signifies *pleasantness;* Tirzah was the first capital of the kingdom of Israel, where Jeroboam lived, and where the other earlier kings of Israel lived before Omri removed the capital to Samaria. 1 Ki. xvi. 15—18, 24."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The artillery of the eyes is an idea common to poets of every nation."—*Good.*

c Gesenius. "From those marvellously beautiful eyes a grave, reproachful look had fallen upon him."—*O. Zöckler.*

d Roberts.

a 1 Ki. xi. 3.

b "In its ethical

brated by every writer who has described or alluded to her character. She admits but of one mate; she never forsakes him till death puts an end to their union; and never abandons of her own accord the nest which their united labour has provided. Ælian and other ancient writers affirm that the turtle and the wood-pigeon punish adultery with death. The black pigeon, when her mate dies, obstinately rejects the embraces of another, and continues in a widowed state for life. Hence, among the Egyptians, a black pigeon was the symbol of a widow who declined to enter again into the marriage relation. This fact was so well known, or at least so generally admitted among the ancients, that Tertullian endeavours to establish the doctrine of monogamy by the example of that bird. These facts have been transferred by later authors to the widowed turtle, which, deaf to the solicitations of another mate, continues, in mournful strains, to deplore her loss, till death puts a period to her sorrows. These facts unfold the true reason that the Church is by Solomon so frequently compared to the dove.[d]

significance invaluable as a Divine witness to the principle of monogamy, under the O. T., and in the luxurious age of Solomon."—*Spk. Com.*

c St. Augustine.

v. 8. *Alcuin*, II. ii. 539; *F. Oakeley*, 21.

v. 9. *Bp. Hall*, v. 236; *J. Archer*, 288.

d Paxton.

10, 11. (10) **who**, question asked by the chorus. **as the morning**, the dawn being regarded as beautiful. **moon**, or the White One.[a] **sun**, or burning heat, comp. Ps. xix. 9. **terrible**, *etc.*, prob. with special reference to the starry host. The fig. is differently used in *v.* 4. (11) **nuts**, Heb. *egôz*, the walnut; still common in northern Palestine:[b] Josephus says it abounded on shores of Lake of Galilee.

The rose of Sharon.—A gentleman being with Mr. Hervey, in his garden, he plucked a rose, and desired the gentleman to present it to his wife, to put her in mind of her Redeemer, the Rose of Sharon. She put such a respect upon the giver and the gift, as to put it into a frame with a glass: upon hearing of this he wrote the gentleman:—"Your lady has shown the most welcome complaisance to me, and to the rose, in putting it to such a use; and could that poor vegetable be sensible, it would rejoice to be a remembrancer of its amiable Creator. I heartily wish she may every day become more and more acquainted with the Rose of Sharon; that His loveliness, riches, and glory may be revealed in her heart by the Holy Ghost."[c]

a Job xxv. 5, xxxi. 26.

"I could see to read by moonlight, when the moon was only in the first quarter."—*Gadsby.*

b "The nuts mentioned here were probably the almond, walnut, filbert, and pistachio."—*Van Lennep.*

c Whitecross.

12, 13. (12) **or ever**, *Heb.* I knew not. **soul**, or her desire; her strong affection. **made . . Ammi-nadib**, or the chariot of a lordly person, or of my willing people.[a] (13) **O Shulamite**, or giving her name, Shulamith. **two armies**, or *Mahanaim*. A dancing company of two hosts. Some particularly graceful form of dancing.[b] Some trans. "A dance as it were of angel choirs."

An American woman.—Some years ago, on a tour to Canada (says Mr. C——, a gentleman in America), I travelled near the White Mountains, in New Hampshire, visiting from house to house, conversing with every person I met about his eternal interests, and presenting all with religious tracts, which were received with so much gratitude and joy as to render my journey exceedingly pleasant. The next year I was employed by the New Hampshire Bible Society to travel round the White Mountains: and calling at a house, I said, in an affectionate manner, "Will you tell me if the Lord Jesus Christ dwells here?" "I trust," said the woman, "that He is precious to my soul, yea, and

a "In a moment her soul is carried away directly, irresistibly, rapidly toward her bridegroom and her King."—*Moody Stuart.*

b "There is nothing incongruous with Oriental custom in a company of ladies asking one of their number to dance before them."—*Spk. Com.* "Ask me no reason why I love you; for though love use reason for its precision,

he admits him not for his councillor. You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I. Ha! ha! then there's more sympathy: you love sack, and so do I. Would you desire better sympathy?"—*Shakespeare.*

c R. T. S.

altogether lovely." I inquired when, and by what means, she hoped she might be born again. "A man of the name of C——," she said, "came in here about a year since, and gave me a tract. When he was gone, one of my children began to read it aloud. It showed me my sins against a holy God, and revealed His wrath against me. I felt that I was lost for ever. I read the tract again and again, and my ruin only appeared greater than before, till at length I had a discovery of the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer." She added, "I have longed to see that Mr. C—— ever since." When I told her I was the man, she looked at me with a pleasing surprise, and expressed her joy and gratitude with such unaffected sincerity, as abundantly repaid me for all the sacrifices I had made. Her husband then said, "You gave me a tract also, but I was unmoved by it: since that, however, I hope the Lord has shown mercy to my soul." Four seasons (adds Mr. C——) I have been out on the delightful business of scattering your silent and powerful missionaries, and were I able, I would travel through every destitute portion of our country, dispersing Bibles and tracts, at my own expense: though faint, yet pursuing.[c]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **shoes**, or sandals. Reference is intended to the gracefulness of her stepping, rather than to the beauty of her shoes.[a] **joints**, *etc.*, ladies in the E. wear eight or ten pairs of drawers, and these are often covered with jewels. They stand in the stead of our gown.[b] (2) **heap . . lilies**, the Jews were in the habit of strewing flowers round their heaps of wheat when threshed in the open air.[c] (3) **two breasts**, as ch. iv. 5.

Note on v. 1.—The word rendered joints means the concealed dress, or drawers, which are still worn by the Moorish and Turkish women of rank. Lady M. W. Montagu, in describing her Turkish dress, says, "the first part of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that reaches down to my shoes, and conceals the legs more modestly than your petticoats; they are of a thin, rose-coloured damask, brocaded with flowers."[d]

4, 5. (4) **neck**, ch. iv. 4. **fishpools**, *etc.*, Heshbon was a royal city of the Amorites. A large pool is still found in the neighbourhood.[a] **Bath-rabbim**, better trans. the populous city; or the daughter of multitudes. **tower of Lebanon**, a straight nose was regarded as forming a handsome profile. The tower referred to is not known. (5) **Carmel**, wh. has a soft and rounded top. **purple**, of the deepest shade, with special reference to its lustre. **held . galleries**, better, bound by the tresses.

Note on v. 4.—Whatever is majestic and comely in the human countenance, whatever commands the reverence and excites the love of the beholder—Lebanon, and its towering cedars, are employed by the sacred writers to express. In the commendation of the Church, the countenance of her Lord is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars: while in the eulogium which He pronounces on His beloved, one feature of her countenance is compared to the highest peak of that mountain, to the Sannin,

a "The richer class wear either socks or stockings, of cotton or wool, or a morocco "mest," wh. is a boot or sock of soft leather, with a sole of the same, and is worn inside the shoe."—*Van Lennep.*
b Lady Sheil.
c Gadsby.
v. 2. *Dr. J. Edwards, Exer.* 130.
d Burder.

a "The simile well sets forth the appearance of a large clear liquid eye."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 5. *E. Erskine*, i. 76.

'O how beautiful it is to love! Even thou that sucerest and laughest in cold indifference or scorn if others are near thee,—thou, too, must acknowledge its truth when thou art alone, and confess that a

which rises, with majestic grandeur, above the tallest cedars that adorn its summits: "Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus." Calmet imagines, with no small degree of probability, that the sacred writer alludes to an elegant tower of white marble, which, in his days, crowned the summit of a lofty precipice, at the foot of which the river Barrady foams, about the distance of two miles from Damascus. When Maundrell visited the place he found a small structure, like a sheikh's sepulchre, erected on the highest point of the precipice, where it had probably stood. From this elevated station, which forms a part of Lebanon, the traveller enjoyed the most perfect view of the city. So charming was the landscape, so rich and diversified the scenery, that he confessedly found it no easy matter to tear himself away from the paradise of delights which bloomed at his feet. Nor was a very late traveller less delighted with this most enchanting prospect.[b]

6, 7. (6) **for delights,** or among delightsome things. (7) **palm tree,** wh. grows straight and tall.[a] **grapes,** or dates growing on the palm tree.

Note on v. 6.—The Eastern women, among other ornaments, used little perfume boxes, or vessels filled with perfumes, to smell at. These were worn suspended from the neck, and hanging down on the breast. This circumstance is alluded to in the bundle of myrrh. These *olfactoriola*, or smelling-boxes (as the Vulgate rightly denominates them), are still in use among the Persian women, to whose necklaces, which fall below the bosom, is fastened a large box of sweets; some of these boxes are as big as one's hand; the common ones are of gold, the others are covered with jewels. They are all bored through, and filled with a black paste very light, made of musk and amber, but of very strong smell.[b]

8—10. (8) **I said,** *etc.*, after admiring his bride, the bridegroom desires to gain her for himself. **nose,** or breath. (9) **roof,** *etc.*, or palate. **sweetly,** or tasting pleasantly. **causing . . speak,** influence of pleasant wine. (10) **my beloved,** as vi. 3.

Note on v. 10.—Olearius observes, in his description of the dress of the Persian women, "Around the cheeks and the chin they have one or two rows of pearls or jewels, so that the whole face is adorned with pearls or jewels. I am aware that this is a very ancient Eastern custom; for already in Solomon's Song it is said, 'thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,' etc. All these Persian court ladies had over their curled locks, instead of pearls, two long and thick cords of woven and beaten gold, hanging down from the crown of the head over the face on both sides; this ornament, because it is worn at court, is quite usual among the Persian women, and does not become them ill, in their black hair" (Della Valla). Rauwolf gives a similar description of the head-dress of the Arabian women in the desert of Mesopotamia: "When they wish to adorn themselves, they have their trinkets, such as balls of marble, and yellow agate, glass beads of divers colours, longish pieces of metal strung upon a thread, hanging pendent upon their temples, nearly a span in length."[a]

11—13. (11) **field,** or country: where in quietness mutual

foolish world is prone to laugh in public at what in private it reveres as one of the highest impulses of our nature; namely, love."—*Longfellow.*

b Paxton.

a "The stem, tall, slender, and erect as rectitude herself, suggests to the Arab poets many a symbol for their lady-love."—*Thomson.*

"Love's voice doth sing as sweetly in a beggar as a king."—*Decker.*

b Burder.

v. 9. *Alex. Pirie, Crit. Obs. Wks.* iii.

v. 10. *Bossuet,* xv. 321.

"A heat full of coldness, a sweet full of bitterness, a pain full of pleasantness, which maketh thoughts have eyes, and hearts, and ears; bred by desire, nursed by delight, weaned by jealousy, killed by dissembling, buried by ingratitude: and this is love."—*Lilly.*

a Rosenmuller.

society may be enjoyed. (12) **let us see**, *etc.*, ch. vi. 11. (13) **mandrakes**, Ge. xxx. 14. Heb. *dudaim*, love-apples.[a]

Note on v. 11.—In the gardens around Aleppo, commodious villas are built for the use of the inhabitants, to which they retire during the oppressive heats of summer. Here, amid the wild and almost impervious thickets of pomegranate, and other fruit-bearing trees, the languid native and exhausted traveller find a delightful retreat from the scorching beams of the sun. A similar custom of retiring into the country, and taking shelter in the gardens at that season, appears to have been followed in Palestine, in ages very remote. The exquisite pleasure which an Oriental feels, while he reclines under the deep shade of the pomegranate, the apple, and other fruitful trees in the Syrian gardens, which, uniting their branches over his head, defend him from the glowing firmament, is well described by Russel. "Revived by the freshening breeze, the purling of the brooks, and the verdure of the groves, his ear will catch the melody of the nightingale, delightful beyond what is heard in England; with conscious gratitude to heaven, he will recline on the simple mat, and bless the hospitable shelter. Beyond the limits of the gardens, hardly a vestige of verdure remains, the fields are turned into a parched and naked waste." In Persia, Mr. Martyn found the heat of the external air quite intolerable. In spite of every precaution, the moisture of the body being soon quite exhausted, he grew restless, and thought he should have lost his senses, and concluded, that though he might hold out a day or two, death was inevitable. Not only the actual enjoyment of shade and water diffuses the sweetest pleasure through the panting bosom of an Oriental, but what is almost inconceivable to the native of a northern clime, even the very idea, the simple recurrence of these gratifications to the mind, conveys a lively satisfaction, and a renovating energy to his heart, when ready to fail him in the midst of the burning desert. "He who smiles at the pleasure we received," says Lichtenstein, "from only being reminded of shade, or thinks this observation trivial, must feel the force of an African sun, to have an idea of the value of shade and water."[b]

a *Mandragora vernalis*, or *Atropa mandragora*. A wild plant common in Pal., of the same genus with the belladonna, bearing small yellow apples, about the size of a nutmeg.

"The consciousness of being loved softens the keenest pang, even at the moment of parting; yea, even the eternal farewell is robbed of half of its bitterness, when uttered in accents that breathe love to the last sigh."—*Addison.*

"We paint love as a child, when he should sit a giant on his clouds, the great disturbing spirit of the world."—*Croly.*

b *Paxton.*

"Lovers say, the heart hath treble wrong, when it is barr'd the aidance of the tongue."—*Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) **as my brother**, *i.e.* of the same rank and class **as** myself. The bride's trouble is the kingly dignity and court-surroundings of her beloved. She is a simple country maiden. (2) **spiced . . pomegranate**, "The juice of the pomegranate still forms a very agreeable sherbet."[a] (3) **left**, *etc.*, see ii. 6. (4) **charge you**, *etc.*, see ii. 7.

Note on v. 2.—The fragrant odour of the wines produced in the vineyards of Lebanon seems chiefly to have attracted the notice of our translators. This quality is either factitious or natural. The Orientals, not satisfied with the fragrance emitted by the essential oil of the grape, frequently put spices into their wines to increase their flavour. To this practice Solomon alludes in these words: "I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate." But Savary, in his *Letters on Greece*, affirms that various kinds of naturally perfumed wines are pro-

a *Gadsby.*

"The ancients sought to increase the strength of their potations by a mixture of spices with their wine; and so likewise do modern Orientals."—*Van Lennep.*

"More loved by me than by the eye the light."—*T. Cooke.*

duced in Crete and some of the neighbouring islands: and the wine of Lebanon, to which the sacred writer alludes, was probably of the same species.[b]

5. who, *etc.*, the cry of the chorus. Formerly the bride approached in a grand procession (ch. iii. 6), now she comes attended only by her spouse. I raised thee, the king reminds her of some former episode in their acquaintance. This apple tree was "the trysting-spot of earliest vows."

Leaning on Christ (*v.* 5).—Observe what this attitude denotes. I. Weariness. II. Dependence. III. Communion. IV. Tenderness. V. Activity.[a]—*Dependence on the Saviour* (*v.* 5).—I. Resting on His promises. II. Relying on His power. III. Realising His love. IV. Rejoicing in His salvation.[b]—*Coming from the wilderness* (*v.* 5).—I. This world may be compared to a wilderness. 1. It is unfruitful: 2. Changeful; 3. Dangerous. II. The Christian coming up from it. 1. He has ceased to regard it as his home; 2. He is detaching his affections from it; 3. He is soon to be removed to another scene. III. As he comes up from it he leans on his Beloved. 1. Resting on His promises; 2. Trusting in His grace; 3. Enjoying His sympathy; 4. Realising His presence. IV. His movements in it excite attention. 1. Inquiry; 2. Admiration; 3. Congratulation.[c]

Shelter only in Christ.—A Chinese convert is spoken of by Dr. Medhurst as having used the following language to illustrate the futility of human merits, and the necessity of relying on Jesus Christ alone for salvation:—"How can a man trust in his own righteousness? It is like seeking shelter under one's own shadow; he may stoop to the very ground, and, the lower we bend, we still find that our shadow is beneath us. But if a man flee to the shadow of a great rock, or of a wide spreading tree, he will find abundant shelter from the rays of the noonday sun. So human merits are unavailing, and Christ alone is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him."[b]

6, 7. (6) set . . heart, *i.e.* let me be united to thee for ever. cruel, or hard. vehement flame, or, "a very flame of the Lord."[a] (7) utterly condemned, or with scorn should he be scorned.

The love that passeth knowledge (*v.* 7).—The text singles out two things about this love. I. It is unquenchable by the waters of—1. Shame and suffering; 2. Of death; 3. Of our unworthiness; 4. Of our long rejection; 5. Of our daily inconsistency. II. It is unpurchasable. 1. As a gift to persuade Him to love; 2. As a payment for having been loved; 3. As a bribe to tempt Him not to love; 4. As a substitute for love.[b]

A seal on the heart.—This alludes to jewels having the name or portrait of the beloved person engraved on them, and worn next the heart or on the arm. In the pictures of the Eastern princesses and heroines there is sometimes a large square jewel on the forepart of the arm, a little below the shoulder. "When all the persons had assembled in the divan every one remained sitting or standing in his place without moving, till in about half an hour came two kapudschis, one of whom carried the imperial signet-ring, and presented it to the grand vizier, who arose from his sofa and received the signet-ring with a kind of bow, kissed it, put it on his hand, took it off again, and put it in the bag in

b Paxton.

v. 5. *Bossuet*, xi. 91; *T. Boston*, x. 550; *E. Erskine*, ii. 124; *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 351; *J. Johnstone*, 150; *A. Roberts*, iii. 264; *J. Cawood*, i. 349; *R. A. Suckling*, 235.

a Stems and Twigs.

b J. T. Nollidge.

c G. Brooks.

"Love is old, old as eternity, but not outworn: with each new being born, or to be born."—*Byron.*

"That love alone, which virtue's laws control, deserves reception in the human soul."—*Euripides.*

"But sweeter still than this, than these, than all, is first and passionate love—it stands alone."—*Byron.*

a Coverdale.

Ro. viii. 35.

vv. 5–7. *R. M. M'Cheyne*, 342.

v. 6. *Bp. W. Nicholson*, 380; *J. Flavel*, vi. *J. Whitty*, ii. 299.

vv. 6, 7. *C. E. Kenaway*, 193.

vv. 6–8. *J. Saurin*, iii. 145.

b Dr. Bonar.

"O artless love, where the soul moves the

tongue, and only nature speaks what nature thinks."—*Dryden.*

which it had been before, and placed both in a pocket at the left side of his kaftan, as it were upon his heart.[c]

8—10. (8) little sister, a younger sister, not yet come to woman's estate. (9) wall, *i.e.* steadfast in virtue. palace of silver, *i.e.* marry her to one of high estate. door, light-minded, easily moved fr. virtue. inclose her, defending her from temptation. (10) a wall, steadfast in chastity. favour, or peace.

An Eastern palace.—The eye is lost in contemplating the rich assemblage of ornaments which appear in every part of this noble hall. From the pavement to the beginning of the arches, the walls are decorated with elegant mosaic; the panels between the arches are filled with a very delicate ornament, which, at a little distance, has the appearance of a plain mass, and the ceiling is composed of stalactites in stucco, and is finished in a style of equal elegance. The distribution of the various parts of this noble apartment is truly enchanting. The balconies above were occupied by musicians; below sat the women; while a *jet d'eau* in the centre diffused a refreshing coolness through the hall. The windows in the background are finished in a similar manner, and look into a little myrtle garden.[c]

c *Rosenmuller.*

"There is a comfort in the strength of love; 'twill make a thing endurable, which else would break the heart."—*Wordsworth.*

11—14. (11) Baal-hamon, a tower so named is mentioned as being in Samaria. Or reference may be to Baalbek. keepers, tenants.[a] (12) my vineyard, wh. was herself, as a loving and faithful wife. those that keep, with possible reference to her brothers, who had been her guardians. (13) cause . . hear, as ch. ii. 14. (14) make haste, or, *flee, my beloved.* mountains of spices, Heb. *Besamin.* Comp. ch. ii. 17,—mountains of Bether, or division. See also ch. iv. 6.

a *Murphy.*

Mountains of Israel.—The only remarkable mountain on the western border of Canaan is Carmel, which lies on the sea-coast, at the south end of the tribe of Asher, and is frequently mentioned in the sacred writings. On this mountain, which is very rocky, and about two thousand feet in height, the prophet Elijah fixed his residence; and the monks of the Greek Church, who have a convent upon it, show the inquisitive stranger the grotto, neatly cut out in the solid rock, where, at a distance from the tumult of the world, the venerable seer reposed. At the distance of a league are two fountains, which they pretend the prophet, by his miraculous powers, made to spring out of the earth; and lower down, towards the foot of the mountain, is the cave where he instructed the people. It is an excavation in the rock, cut very smooth both above and below, of about twenty paces in length, fifteen in breadth, and very high; and Thevenot, who paid a visit to the monks of Mount Carmel, pronounces it one of the finest grottos that can be seen. The beautiful shape and towering height of Carmel furnish Solomon with a striking simile, expressive of the loveliness and majesty of the Church in the eyes of her Redeemer: "Thy head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thy head like purple; the King is held in the galleries." The mountain itself is nothing but rock. The monks, however, have, with great labour, covered some parts of it with soil, on which they cultivate flowers and fruits of various kinds; but the fields around have been celebrated in all ages for the extent of their pastures and the richness of their verdure.

a "Vineyards are often let out to husbandmen. The price or hire is always paid in kind, and amounts to one-half the produce of the vineyard. We have, however, personally known many cases in which the hire was paid in money."—*Van Lennep.*

The Lord's love is free as the air; full as the ocean; boundless as eternity; immutable as His throne; and unchangeable as His nature.

"There are depths of love in Christ beyond what we have seen; therefore, dig deep, and labour and take pains for Him, and set by so much time in the day for Him as you can. He will be won with labour."—*Rutherford.*

So great was the fertility of this region, that, in the language of the sacred writers, the name Carmel is often equivalent to a fruitful field. This was undoubtedly the reason that the covetous and churlish Nabal chose it for the range of his numerous flocks and herds.[b]

Love.—

Seemeth not love at times so occupied
For thee, as though it cared for none beside?

To great and small things love alike can reach,
And cares for each as all, and all as each.

Love of my bonds partook, that I might be
In turn partaker of its liberty.

Love found me in the wilderness, at cost
Of painful guests, when I myself had lost.

Love, on its shoulders joyfully did lay
Me, weary with the greatness of my way.

Love lit the lamp and swept the house all round,
Till the lost money in the end was found.

Love, the King's image there would stamp again,
Effaced in part and soil'd with rust and stain.

'Twas love, whose quick and ever watchful eye
The wanderer's first step homeward did espy.

From its own wardrobe love gave word to bring
What things I needed—shoes, and robe, and ring.

Love threatens, that it may not strike, and still
Unheeded, strikes, that so it may not kill.

Love set me up on high; when I grew vain
Of that my height, love brought me down again.

Love often draws good for us from our ill,
Skilful to bless us e'en against our will.

The bond-servant of love alone is free;
All other freedom is but slavery.

How far above all prize love's costly wine,
What can the meanest chalice make divine!

Fear this effects, that I do not the ill,
Love more—that I thereunto have no will.

Seeds burst not their dark cells without a throe;
All birth is effort; shall not love's be so?

Love weeps—but from its eyes these two things win
The largest tears—its own, its brother's sin.

The sweetness of the trodden camomile
Is love's, which injured, yields more sweets the while.

b Paxton.

"It is like the sun in the sky, that throws his comfortable beams upon all and forbears not to warm even that earth that heareth weeds. Love extends to earth and heaven. In heaven it affecteth God, the Maker and the Mover; the angels, as our guardians; the triumphant saints, for their pious sanctity. On earth, it embraceth those that fear the Lord especially; it wisheth conversion to those that do not; it counsels the rich; it comforts the poor; it reverenceth superiors, respecteth inferiors; doth good to friends, no evil to foes; wisheth well to all. This is the latitude of love." —*T. Adams.*

"She never told her love, but let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought; and, with a green and yellow melancholy, she sat like patience on a monument, smiling at grief." —*Shakespeare.*

"I find she loves him much, because she hides it. Love teaches cunning even to innocence; and, when he gets possession, his first work is to dig deep within a heart, and there lie hid, and, like a miser in the dark, to feast alone." —*Dryden.*

"Love is the root of creation; God's essence. Worlds without number lie in His bosom like children; He made them for His purpose only,—only to love and to be loved again. He breathed forth His spirit into the slumbering dust, and upright standing, it laid its hand on its heart, and felt it was warm with a flame out of heaven; quench, O quench not that flame! it is the breath of your being."—*Longfellow.*

The heart of love is with a thousand woes
Pierced, which secure indifference never knows.

The rose aye wears the silent thorn at heart,
And never yet might pain for love depart.

Once o'er this painful earth a Man did move,
The man of griefs, because the man of love.

Hope, faith and love, at God's high altar shine,
Lamp triple-branched, and fed with oil Divine.

Two of these triple-lights shall once grow pale,
They burn without, but love within the veil.

Nothing is true but love, nor aught of worth;
Love is the incense which doth sweeten earth.

Oh, merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware!
Love is the only coin that passes there.

The wine of love can be obtained by none,
Save Him who trod the wine-press all alone!

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